NATION

Lights worth ₹50L stolen from Ayodhya

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BUSINESS

SC ruling on mining royalty to jolt industry

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SPORTS

Hockey India retires Sreejesh's No. 16 jersey at Sr level

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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TEAM SALAR WISHES ALL ITS READERS
A HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

India gears up for 78th I-Day amid tight security

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Ahead of Independence Day, security has been tightened following inputs that one or two operatives from terrorist group may attempt a fidayeen attack in Delhi and Punjab. Over 10,000 cops, facial recognition cameras and snipers deployed in Delhi and security camps set up in 13 villages in Chhattisgarh's Maoist-hit Bastar region where the Tricolour will be hoisted for the first time on Thursday.

According to some intelligence reports the fidayeen attack could be attempted a day or two after the Independence Day.

In Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will unfurl the national flag at the Red Fort for the 11th consecutive year. Mock drills were conducted in VVIP areas on Wednesday, according to officials. Snipers, elite SWAT commandos, kite catchers and sharpshooters will be positioned at strategic locations for the security of the prime minister and other VVIP guests, a senior officer said.

In Punjab and Haryana, a thick security blanket has been thrown around the venues where governors, chief ministers and ministers will unfurl the national flag on Independence Day, officials said.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will unfurl the Tricolour at a function in Jalandhar while his Haryana counterpart Nayab Singh Saini will hoist it in Kurukshetra. Security forces were on alert in Tripura to ensure peaceful Independence Day celebrations.

Thirteen remote villages in Chhattisgarh's Maoist-hit Bastar region will witness hoisting of the national flag for the first time on Thursday due to the presence of security forces, according to Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj

—Salar News/PTI

Town Hall illuminated with tricolour on the eve 78th Independence Day celebrations in Bengaluru on Wednesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

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SC lets states take dues from mining firms, Centre

Centre, firms must pay pending dues worth crores since 2005

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

In a major victory for mineral-rich states, Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed them to recover from Centre and mining companies royalty and tax dues on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands worth thousands of crore of rupees since 1 April, 2005, over a period of 12 years.

In a majority 8:1 verdict on 25 July, the top court had ruled that the legislative power to tax mineral rights vests in states and not Parliament.

On Wednesday, pronouncing a related judgement on behalf of the nine-judge constitution bench, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud rejected the arguments of the Centre and mining companies, including Public Sector Undertakings, for operationalising the 25 July verdict with prospective effect. During a hearing on the issue on 31

July, the Centre had opposed the demand of states for refund of royalty levied on mines and minerals since 1989, saying if the 25 July verdict is implemented with retrospective effect, the PSUs, according to initial estimates, would lose more than Rs 70,000 crore.

The bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, Abhay S Oka, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih, noted the submission of the Steel Authority of India Limited that it stands to lose around Rs 3,000 crore in the event of the judgement coming into force retrospectively. CJI Chandrachud said the Wednesday's verdict will be signed by eight judges of the bench who had delivered the majority judgement on 25 July. He said Justice Nagarathna will not sign the verdict as she had given a dissenting view on 25 July. "While the States may levy or renew demands of tax, if any, pertaining to Entries 49 and 50 of List II of the Seventh Schedule in terms of the law laid down in the decision in MADA (Mineral Area Development Authority) (25 July verdict) the demand of tax shall not operate on transactions made prior to 1 April, 2005," the court ordered. *—PTI*

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NMDC, Tata Steel stocks tumble by 6%

Even after the Sensex rose by 149.85 points, shares of multiple leading mining companies laggards. Tata Steel, NMDC, JSW steel and others experienced some loss up to 6 per cent trading session. Shares of Tata Steel closed at -1.82% whereas share prices of NMDC and JSW steel were down by -6.02 per cent and 1.93 per cent respectively.

SHOCK VERDICT

CAS junks Vinesh's Silver appeal

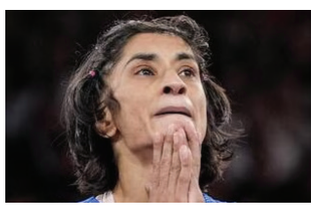
PARIS, 14 AUG

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her disqualification from Olympic Games final has been rejected by the ad-hoc division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the IOA said on Wednesday and lashed out at "inhumane regulations" that fail to consider the "physiological and psychological stresses faced by athletes".

The 29-year-old Vinesh was disqualified for being 100g overweight at the time of the weigh-in on the morning of the women's 50kg freestyle final last week.

In a statement, IOA President PT Usha expressed "shock and disappointment at the decision of the Sole Arbitrator at the CAS to dismiss wrestler Vinesh Phogat's application against the United World Wrestling (UWW) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)."

"The operative part of the



Vinesh Phogat **PHOTO: PTI**

August 14 decision, which dismisses Vinesh's application to be awarded a shared silver medal in women's 50 kg category at the Paris Olympic Games has significant implications for her in particular and the sporting community at large," the IOA stated.

The rejection of Vinesh's appeal means India's tally from the Paris Olympics will be of six medals which includes one silver and five bronze. Crestfallen after her disqualification, Vinesh, in an emotional social media post, announced her retirement from the sport. *—PTI*

We will stop Ladki Bahin scheme: SC warns Maharashtra

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Supreme Court on Wednesday cautioned the Maharashtra government that it will stop freebies offered by the State like the 'Ladki Bahin Yojna' if it does not pay up the compensation due to landowners who were allotted denotified reserve forest land. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan reiterated that if the needful is not done by 28 August, the State's Chief Secretary may need to be summoned and recent sops announced in the budget would be stopped. The bench was hearing a matter related to the compliance with its earlier order directing payment of compensatory afforestation levy by the State in connection with denotification of forest land at Pashan, Pune.

—Courtesy, Bar and Bench

Rahul Navin appointed ED director

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Acting Enforcement Directorate (ED) Chief Rahul Navin was on Wednesday appointed as the full-time director of the federal anti-money laundering agency. An order issued by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) said the appointment of Navin, a 1993-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the Income Tax cadre, has been made "for a period of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or until further orders, whichever is earlier". Navin, 57, joined the ED in November, 2019 as a Special Director. He was appointed as the acting Director of the ED after the tenure of his predecessor Sanjay Kumar Mishra came to an end on 15 September last year. An expert in international taxation matters, Navin's tenure as the ED head saw the high profile arrests of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.***—PTI***

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State halts transactions with SBI and PNB

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Karnataka government has ordered all its departments, boards, corporations, public sector units and universities to withdraw all their deposits and investments in State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank and stop transacting any business with these institutions.

The government's decision follows two incidents of financial irregularities involving these banks. In 2011, Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board invested Rs 25 crore in a one-year fixed deposit at PNB's Rajajinagar branch. Despite receiving receipts for Rs 12 crore and Rs 13 crore from different branches, only Rs 13 crore was returned after the term ended. The remaining Rs 12 crore is still unrecovered, with allegations that Rs 14 crore was illegally transferred by bank officials. Similarly, in 2013, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board deposited Rs 10 crore in an SBI branch on Avenue Road. Before the deposit term expired, bank officials allegedly forged documents to divert the funds for a private company's loan, and the Rs 10 crore is yet to be returned.

PC Jaffer, Secretary to Government (Budget and Resources), told Salar News, "We have received reports from Public Account Committee on these and we have been discussing how to recover the money." The meeting with the bank officials did not yield any result and the matter is now sub judice. The Finance Secretary said once the details are collected from across the State, a report will be submitted to Public Accounts Committee.

—Salar News

MULTIPLE PENETRATION, INJURIES

Kolkata doc gangraped: Autopsy

KOLKATA, 14 AUG

The autopsy report of the woman doctor who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here has indicated multiple penetrations and injuries to several parts of the body.

It also stated that her death was "homicidal" and "antemortem", negating some claims that she was raped after being murdered.

There were multiple external injuries, including on the lower and upper lips, nose, cheeks and lower jaw, said the report. Injuries on the temporal bone of her skull and blood coagulation on its frontal portion were also mentioned. The report also said after being sexually assaulted, she was first throttled by applying pressure to her neck and then smothered to death.

Meanwhile, another report claims victim had 150 mg amount of semen in her body, indicating gangrape. The information was given by her parents to the Calcutta High Court. Kolkata Police rejected reports about them informing about 'suicide' to the family of raped-murdered RG Kar doctor.

Midnight protest

Thousands of women from different walks are set to gather in different parts of West Bengal midnight. Responding to the "Women, Reclaim the Night" call given on social media by commoners, college students, home-makers and employees of offices will congregate in key thoroughfares in small towns and big cities, including in various parts of Kolkata. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

> **The attempt to save the accused instead of providing justice to the victim raises serious questions on the hospital and the local administration**
>
> —Rahul Gandhi, Cong MP

> **I want to ask Congress... how many incidents have taken place in your states... what action do you take? And under CPIM rule there were a plethora of crimes (and) the then government was silent**
>
> —Mamata Banerjee, WB CM

1 DEAD, 2 INJURED IN COOKER BLAST NEAR JP NAGAR

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

A man has died and another was injured allegedly due to a cooker blast at their residence in Puttenahalli, JP Nagar here, police said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred on Tuesday while they were cooking rice, they said.

Police said the incident occurred at the JP Nagar branch of the Udupi Upahara at 10 am on Monday. On Wednesday a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) visited the explosion site for cross examination. Two migrant workers Sameer and Mohsin both hailing from Uttar Pradesh were injured in the incident and are undergoing treatment. Two men staying in a house on the terrace of a building were preparing rice in a cooker when the lid of the vessel blew up. *—PTI*

ON I-DAY EVE

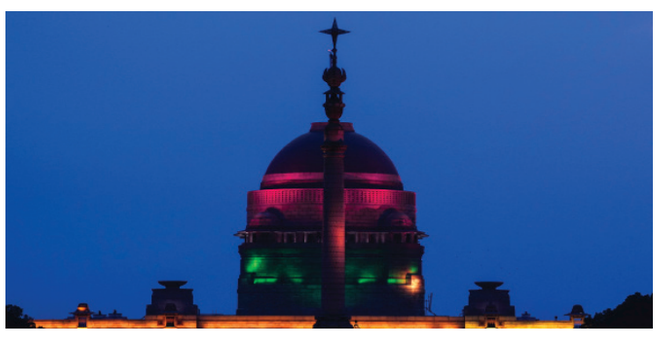
24 Karnataka cops among 1,037 honoured

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The government on Wednesday announced service medals for 1,037 police personnel of various central and state forces on the eve of Independence Day, of which 24 are from Karnataka

According to a Union Home Ministry statement, 214 personnel will be decorated with bravery medals, including a President's Medal for Gallantry (PMG) and 231 Medal for Gallantry (GM). The GM includes four decorations for fire fighters and one for a civil defence personnel.

A maximum of 52 bravery medals has been given to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), 31 to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, 17 police personnel each from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, 15



An illuminated view of the Raisina Hills ahead of 78th Independence Day celebration in New Delhi, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

from Chhattisgarh and a dozen from Madhya Pradesh.

The lone PMG medal, the highest police decoration for bravery, has been announced for Telangana Police Head Constable Chaduvu Yadaiah for showing "rare gallantry" in apprehending two notorious chain snatchers and arms traffickers on July 25, 2022.

The two criminals had "viciously" attacked the cop and repeatedly stabbed him all over his body but he did not let them loose from his grip. The brave policeman suffered severe injuries and was hospitalised for 17 days, according to the home ministry statement.

The other medals include 94 President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and 729 Medal for Meritorious Service.

These medals are announced twice a year, the other being on the occasion of Republic Day.

No medal for Haryana cops, who stoped farmers protest

This Independence Day, no police officer from Haryana will receive a gallantry award. The Haryana government had recommended six police officers citing their role in restricting the protesting farmers from marching from the Shambhu border to New Delhi but the Centre rejected all six names, citing "delayed submission". *—PTI*

Army captain, terrorist killed in Doda encounter

JAMMU, 14 AUG

An Army captain and a terrorist were killed in an ongoing operation in the higher reaches of Jammu region's Doda district on Wednesday, officials said.

A civilian was also injured in the encounter that broke out on the eve of Independence Day and is the latest in a series of incidents in the Jammu region that has witnessed a spike in violence of late.

This is the fourth encounter in recent days in the Udhampuri-Doda-Kishtwar region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Bullets rang out on Wednesday morning in a thickly-forested area during a cordon-and-search operation (CASO) launched by a joint team of security personnel to track down a group of foreign terrorists hiding in the Shivgarh-Assar belt, the offi-

Deepak Singh **PHOTO: X@AMANKUM14166029**

cials said.

Four blood-soaked rucksacks were seized from the site of the encounter, leading officials to initially believe that a total of four terrorists were killed. M-4 carbines were also found, the officials said.

The terrorists crossed into Doda from a forest area near Patnitop in adjacent Udhampur district after a brief exchange of fire between security forces and the ultras there on Tuesday evening, officials said. *—PTI*

Fire personnel doused a two-wheeler that was allegedly lit up by the rider in front of Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Wednesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Photo exhibitions mark Partition Remembrance Day

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

To observe 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day,' a photo exhibition was inaugurated at KSR Bengaluru Station on Wednesday, bringing to light the suffering and displacement experienced by millions during the partition of India. The exhibition was inaugurated by Divisional Railway Manager Yogesh Mohan and attended by Additional Divisional Railway Manager Parikshit Mohanpuria. The exhibition aims to honour the memory of those affected by the partition. Other than at KSR Bengaluru Station, the exhibition was also held at 13 stations across Bengaluru Division. Mohan, DRM of South Western Railways, said, "Partition Horrors Remembrance Day is the day where millions of people lost their lives as well as their livelihood due to the partition."—*Salar News*

Doddanekundi road to be closed for railway work

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Motorists in Bengaluru are advised to brace for traffic disruptions as Doddanekundi main road will be closed for railway 'U' guard work. The closure will be in effect from 8pm on 14 to 18 August, 2024. The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) issued a traffic advisory urging commuters to use alternative routes to avoid inconvenience. Those travelling towards Doddanekundi Village/HAL from Outer Ring Road Doddanekundi Junction should take a U-turn at Karthik Nagar Junction and proceed via ISRO Road. Similarly, motorists who are heading towards Outer Ring Road from Doddanekundi can take ISRO Road and turn left at Karthik Nagar Junction.
—*Salar News*

DC urges students to avail Yuva Nidhi allowance

MYSURU, 14 AUG

Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy has issued a directive to officials to increase awareness among unemployed degree and diploma students regarding Yuva Nidhi scheme. The scheme, initiated by State, aims to provide unemployment allowance to students who completed degree and diploma examinations in 2023-2024. He urged principals of degree and diploma colleges to motivate their students who graduated in 2023-24 to register for it.—*Salar News*

Areca support price proposal to be sent to State govt

MANGALURU, 14 AUG

Deputy Commissioner of Dakshina Kannada district M P Mullai Muhilan has said he will send a proposal to the State government regarding the support price for the arecanut crop. Presiding over the discussion with farmer leaders about the problems of the ryots of the district at the Collector's office on Tuesday, he said farmers had sought fixing of support price for arecanut. He also said he would send a proposal in this regard to the state government. Similarly, arecanut growers in Udupi, Chikkamgaluru and Shivamogga districts have also appealed to their respective district administrations to send the official appeals to the government. Another issue that came up during the meeting was regarding the issue of simplified gun licences for protecting crops from wild animals.
—*ANI*

Exclude rich from guarantees: Ministers

They said it should only benefit economically weak

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Two ministers in Congress government on Wednesday raised the pitch to tweak its much-touted 'guarantee schemes' to benefit only the economically-weaker sections to lessen the financial burden.

Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi said State exchequer will be able to save at least Rs 10,000 crore annually by excluding the rich from the schemes, which were pre-poll promises of the party.

According to political analysts, these promises played a key part in Congress storming to power, dethroning BJP, in the Assembly elections in May last year. However, the schemes failed to sway the voters in this year's Lok Sabha elections, in which the party bagged only nine seats of the total 28 in the State with the rest going to BJP-JD(S) combine. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had, while presenting the state budget earlier this year, announced that Rs. 52,000 crore has been set aside for the five guarantee schemes during 2024-25.

Jarkiholi said: "I am not saying that they (guarantees) should be stopped. People are saying that these guarantees should be given to the poor and not the rich people. This is being discussed in hotels, among workers and everywhere."

On whether revising the schemes would have a bearing on the popularity of the government, Jarkiholi said: "We are not stopping it (guarantees). It cannot be done outright. There is a Cabinet and legislative party. These decisions have to be taken at that level, not at my level. Party has to decide."

Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure MB Patil said these guarantees are the Congress party's commitment and hence, they will be continued.

The Opposition BJP latched onto Jarkiholi's statement. BJP State Chief BY Vijayendra said the State government is "unable to take the burden of freebies as it has no money to do it." "In this background, it should not be surprising if the Congress leaders not only try to curtain these guarantees but stop them altogether," he said in a post on 'X'. —*PTI*

Cong govt rolled out guarantees without funds, says Ashoka

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

State BJP Opposition criticised the government for implementing pre-poll guarantees without securing the necessary funds, accusing the ruling party of pushing State into financial despair. BJP Opposition leader R Ashoka on Wednesday highlighted the financial strain on entities such as BESCOM, KSRTC, and other transport undertakings, which are reportedly struggling to meet expenses due to the implementation of guarantees. —*Salar News*

DK Shivakumar *PHOTO: SALAR*

GUARANTEE SCHEMES TO CONTINUE: DKS

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said guarantee schemes introduced by State government would continue indefinitely, regardless of any opposition, even if BJP leaders "take a hundred births". "As the Congress State President, I am saying that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said there is no question of altering or scrapping the guarantee schemes for any reason," Shivakumar said.

Shivakumar said the government will look into complaints against those who pay Goods and Services Tax and income tax but still avail benefits under the guarantee schemes. "There are complaints that some people who have more income are availing this benefit. We will review that," he said.

He inaugurated Congress Janasamparka Centre and Guarantee Scheme Implementation Committee in Padmanabhanagar on Wednesday.

—*Salar News*

Protect minorities in Bangladesh, Rizwan tells PM

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Expressing concern over the political turmoil and reported atrocities against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, a City Congress legislator on Wednesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to hesitate to take decisive military action like former prime minister late Indira Gandhi did in 1971.

Rizwan Arshad, who represents Shivajinagar, in a letter to Modi, also appealed to him to take "decisive action" to not only address concerns of minorities in Bangladesh but also in India, who have been under "constant attack both economically and socially by the right wing."

"I write to you today as a concerned citizen of India deeply distressed by the recent reports and videos circulating on social media, highlighting the ongoing political turmoil in Bangladesh and the atrocities being reported against Hindu minorities in the region," Arshad said.

If these reports are true, given the historical and cultural ties between India and Bangladesh, it is imperative that India takes a "proactive stance" in addressing these issues, he said.

Noting that the safety and well-being of the Hindu minorities in Bangladesh should be of paramount concern, the MLA urged the Prime Minister to engage with the new Bangladeshi government to ensure that immediate and effective measures are taken to protect their rights and dignity.

"The right-wing social media influencers and handles in India have been circulating news which if true (many have been found fake too), I urge the Government of India to ascertain the authenticity of these reports/videos. If they are proven true, the Government of India should take firm action," he said.

—*PTI*

Rizwan Arshad *PHOTO: SALAR*

- Expressing concern over the political turmoil and reported atrocities against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh, Rizwan Arshad MLA on Wednesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to hesitate to take decisive military action like former prime minister late Indira Gandhi did in 1971.

PHOTO: SALAR

PEJAWAR SEER RAISES CONCERN OVER BANGLADESH

UDUPI, 14 AUG

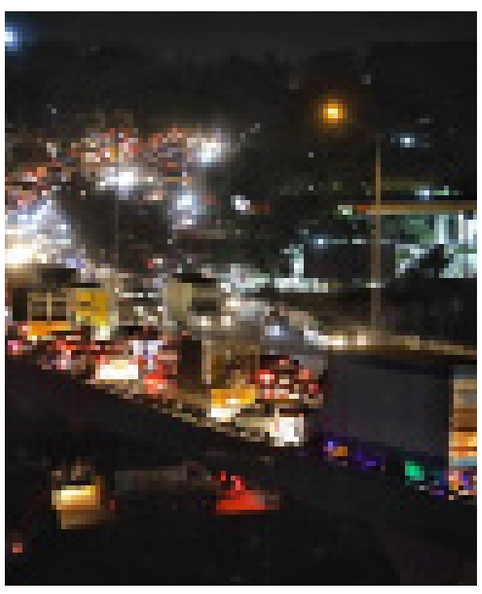
Senior Swamiji of Udupi Pejawar Mutt Vishwaprasanna Teertha Swamiji has voiced concern over the escalating violence against Hindus in Bangladesh and urged greater awareness and spiritual intervention to address it.

In a video message released on Tuesday, the Swamiji condemned the worsening conditions faced by Hindus, not only in Bangladesh but also within India. He emphasised the need for the Hindu community to confront these challenges and turn to prayer as a means of fostering global peace, which he suggested may be the only effective solution.

The Swamiji also highlighted a worrying trend of voices being silenced when they speak out against such atrocities. He called on society to remain vigilant and take a proactive stance in response to these injustices.

Expressing scepticism about the efficacy of relying solely on government action, the Swamiji urged citizens to focus on prayer, advocating for peace and the well-being of the world. —*Salar News*

FESTIVAL CHEER



Shoppers throng KR Market in Bengaluru on Wednesday to buy flowers and pooja materials for Varamahalakshmi festival; Nayandahalli Junction on Outer Ring Road saw traffic jams on Wednesday as Bengalureans travel for a long weekend extended by Raksha Bandhan on 19 August *PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Byrathi Suresh sues BJP MLC

MYSURU, 14 AUG

A Former minister and BJP MLC AH Vishwanath on Wednesday said Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh has filed a defamation suit against him for questioning irregularities at Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Vishwanath, a lawyer, said he received a notice seeking Rs 50 crore relief on Sunday and he will face the defamation suit in court.

The BJP MLC said he will stand by his statement of about 500 MUDA sites allegedly distributed to beneficiaries after Suresh assumed charge as Urban Development Minister. Chief Minister Siddarmaaiah and Suresh had demanded MUDA to sanction Rs 62 crore and Rs 50 crore, respectively, for not returning alternative sites, he accused.

On Mysuru Royal Family objecting to State government's enactment of Sri Chamundeshwari Temple Development Authority Act 2024, the MLC said the dispute between Siddaramaiah and the royal family comes up whenever he becomes CM or deputy CM in the State. He asked Siddaramaiah to withdraw the constitution of the Authority as it would not be helpful in any way to the people. —*Salar News*

Belagavi meeting attendees not rebels: Pratap Simha

MYSURU, 14 AUG

Former BJP MP Pratap Simha on Wednesday said he and others who had attended a meeting at Belagavi headed by BJP leaders Ramesh Jarkiholi and Basangouda Patil Yatnal are not party rebels but are sincere party workers and leaders.

The meeting was convened to discuss the preparations to hold padayatra from Kudalasangama to Ballari on 17 September against Congress government for its alleged financial irregularities in Karnataka State Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation.

Simha said they have requested the party high command to give permission to hold this padayatra that will "shake" State Congress government as it not only committed serious financial irregularities in the corporation but also allegedly diverted funds meant for welfare of SC/STs in implementing its guarantees schemes.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao had released a photo of Simha along with Gowri Lankesh muder case accused Maddur native Naveen Kumar, saying they are friends.

Simha hit back at this, saying Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi are also accused in National Herald cases. "Congress leaders from across the country seek their blessing from them even today. Is it wrong to talk with murder accused?" he asked.

—*Salar News*

Pratap Simha *PHOTO: PTI*

Ram Lalla idol sculptor fails to obtain US visa

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

Renowned sculptor Arun Yogiraj has failed to obtain a US visa, sources in his family said on Wednesday.

Mysuru-based Yogiraj, the sculptor of the Ram Lalla idol installed at Ayodhya's Ram temple, was supposed to travel to the US this month-end on a 20-day trip. The 41-year-old was scheduled to attend the 12th AKKA World Kannada Conference in Richmond, Virginia.

The World Kannada Sammelana-2024 is organized by the American Kannada Koota Sangha.

—*PTI*

CAN'T STAY ORDER ON AGGREGATOR: HC

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

A two-judge bench of the High Court in Bengaluru has declined to stay the order of a single-judge bench, which had upheld the State government's mandate limiting service charges for auto-rickshaw rides booked through platforms like Ola, Uber and Rapido to just five per cent.

The appeal against the single-judge's order was heard by Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Arvind.

The division bench on Tuesday decided not to issue an interim injunction and deferred the final hearing to 29 August.

However, the bench did grant a stay on the directive for the Registrar (Judicial) to forward a copy of the single-judge's order to the. —*PTI*

State lost Rs 12 crore to cybercrime on Tuesday

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

A total of Rs 12 crore was lost by cybercrime victims across the State on Tuesday.

The helpline (1930) set up by Karnataka Police to report cybercrime received around 297 calls on the day, a senior police official with Communications, Logistics and Modernisation Department told Salar News. The helpline on average receives around 300 from victims across the State who want to report cybercrime.

Karnataka police urged cybercrime victims to immediately register complaint with 1930 and not to wait till the next day to approach a police station. "If people register quickly, the chances of getting the lost money is higher as we can track the number and block the bank account," the official said.

Victims can report cybercrime at National Cybercrime Reporting Portal of Ministry of Home Affairs (www.cybercrime.gov.in), National Cyber Crime Helpline (1930) or approach the bank concerned.
—*Salar News*

DATA SHEET

- HELPLINE NO - 1930
- 300 calls received daily by 1930 helpline
- Rs 12 cr lost on Tuesday
- Rs 592 crore is total money lost to cybercrimes in last five years
- Of Rs 592 crore, Rs 565 crore (8,231 cases) was lost to job frauds and Rs 25 crore (1,322 cases) to loan apps

MALNAD REGION

'Nature degradation causing landslides'

SRINGERI, 14 AUG

Environmentalist and author Dr Kalkuli Vittal Hegde, who is spearheading the environmental movement in the Malnad areas, said unscientific methods of development and scant respect for structural integrity of hills were among reasons for incidents of landslides in Shiroor and Wayanad recently.

He also expressed concern over the increase in landslides and erratic rainfall in the Western Ghats at a press conference here on Tuesday.

"Too much use of fossil fuels and irresponsible development models have resulted in a great degree of topsoil erosion on both sides of the Western Ghats, which is a barometer of the environmental health of the Southern Peninsular region," he said.

Hegde is the first environmental expert on the Malnad regions (hilly terrain) of the southern peninsular region, to collect rain related statistics from 1895 to 2020 and beyond until the current monsoon.

"We were warned by unexplained occurrences of cyclones even on western seaboard of the Arabian Sea since 2020. But we chose to ignore the signals, and now we have enough and more rain than typical monsoons every alternative year and the increase of volumes of rain in certain areas like Kodagu, Wayanad, the coastal region, and the slopes of Western Ghats on the western region is fearsome."

With regard to Shiroor, he analysed that unscientific methods of development and scant respect for the structural integrity of the hills had caused the landslide. The lopsided designs of the development of the National Highway, taking a four-lane highway through a laterite plate, cutting through it, and exposing porous laterite soil encased inside, led to the landslide.

"Even the hills and mountains have their own unique weight distribution pattern, The water content inside the hills and mountains determines the weight distribution, but when the foot of such hills and mountains is cut for a highway project, it tips off the weight of the natural structure, resulting in landslides. Kodagu landslides were also triggered due to unscientific development models in 2018," he said. —*PTI*

Kalkuli Vittal Hegde *PHOTO: PTI*

Searches resume at landslide-hit Shirur

BENGALURU, 14 AUG

After more than two weeks, full-fledged search operations were resumed on Wednesday by the Navy, National Disaster Response Force along with other agencies to trace Kerala lorry driver Arjun and two others who were missing following a landslide at Shirur village in Uttara Kannada district, police said.

The incident which occurred on National Highway 66 on 16 July claimed the lives of eight people. The search operations were halted on 28 July due to adverse weather conditions, high river current and other factors, they said.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had written to his Karnataka counterpart Siddaramaiah requesting him to resume operations to trace the lorry driver from Kozhikode.

Superintendent of Police (Karwar), Narayana M, said a full-fledged search operation resumed on Wednesday by the coordinated efforts of the Navy, NDRF, State Disaster Response Force, and the department of fisheries and port. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

P Harish to be India's next envoy to UN in New York

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Seasoned diplomat Parvathaneni Harish was on Wednesday appointed as India's next ambassador to the United Nations in New York. Harish, a 1990-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is presently serving as India's ambassador to Germany. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a brief statement. The position of India's ambassador or permanent representative to the UN has been lying vacant after Ruchira Kamboj retired in June. —PTI

Amrit Udyan to open for public from 16 Aug-15 Sept

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The iconic Amrit Udyan will open for public for a month from Friday, the Rashtrapati Bhavan has said.President Droupadi Murmu graced the opening of Amrit Udyan Summer Annuals Edition on Wednesday, it said. The Amrit Udyan will remain open for public from 16 August to 15 September from 10am to 6pm except on Mondays which will be the maintenance day for the Udyan, said the statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The last entries will be allowed at 05.15 pm. 29 August will be exclusively reserved for sportspersons to mark the National Sports Day and September 5 will be reserved for teachers on Teachers' Day, it said: For entry, registration is mandatory. The visit to the famed gardens is free of cost. Visitors can book their slot online on the Rashtrapati Bhavan website (https://visit.rashtrapatibhavan.gov.in/). Walk-in visitors can register themselves through self service kiosks placed outside gate no 35. Entries will be from gate no 35 of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, near the Avenue Road. —PTI

HC holds conviction of former Bihar MLA Anant Singh

PATNA, 14 AUG

The Patna High Court on Wednesday set aside the conviction of former Bihar MLA Anant Kumar Singh, in two cases of similar nature which had earned him sentences of 10 years each. In separate orders, Justice Chandra Shekhar Jha allowed appeals of Singh challenging the orders of MP/MLA court, Patna, passed in June and July. Singh is now expected to walk out of jail. A gangster turned politician who had represented the Mokama Assembly seat several times, Singh had faced disqualification following the first order of conviction passed in June 2022, relating to a case lodged after an AK-47 rifle, ammunition and two hand grenades were recovered from his ancestral residence. —PTI

Modi to present certificates to 11 lakh 'Lakhpati Didis

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute certificates to 11 lakh women who benefitted from the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme on 25 August, in Maharashtra's Jalgaon, Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Wednesday. His announcement came at an event where he was addressing women Self Help Group members who benefitted from the 'Lakhpati Didi' and 'Namo Drone Didi' schemes of the government, and are in the national capital to attend the Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort. Under the 'Namo Drone Didi' scheme, subsidies are provided to women self-help groups on the purchase of drones. A 'Lakhpati Didi' is an SHG member whose annual income is Rs 1 lakh or more. Stating that the government wants to reach a target of three crore 'Lakhpati Didis', Chouhan said 11 lakh of such women will be given certificates on 25 August. —PTI

Criminal laws honour freedom fighters

'Groundwork done for economic reforms'

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

President Droupadi Murmu in her address to the nation on the eve of India's 78th Independence Day, on Wednesday hailed the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the new Indian legal system, as a tribute to the freedom fighters.

"In adopting the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita from July this year, we have removed one more relic of the colonial era. The new code is oriented towards ensuring justice for the victims of crime instead of focusing on punishment alone. I see this change as a tribute to the freedom fighters," Murmu said in her address to the nation on the eve of the 78th Independence Day.

She declared that the groundwork has been laid for a new era of economic reforms aimed at elevating India to the status of a developed nation.

The President highlighted India's impressive economic trajectory and said the country has emerged as the fastest-growing major economy, boasting an average annual GDP growth rate of 8 per cent between 2021 and 2024.

President Droupadi Murmu speaks during an address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

"It is a matter of pride that India has become the fifth-largest economy in the world, and we are on the cusp of breaking into the top three economies soon," she remarked.

The President attributed this remarkable progress to the relentless efforts of workers and farmers, the foresight of planners and wealth creators, and the visionary leadership guiding the nation.

She emphasised the government's ambitious goal of transforming India into a 'Viksit Bharat' -- a developed nation -- by 2047, coinciding with the centenary of India's Independence.

The President also addressed the positive impacts of high economic growth on the populace, noting that it has resulted in increased disposable income and a significant reduction in poverty levels.

She emphasised the need to strengthen affirmative action as a tool for inclusion while urging the rejection of divisive tendencies rooted in perceived social hierarchies. —PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Abhishek Singhvi gets Cong RS ticket from Telangana

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Congress on Wednesday named Abhishek Manu Singhvi as its candidate for the ensuing Rajya Sabha bypoll in Telangana.

Elections to 12 Rajya Sabha seats in nine states, including Telangana, will be held on 3 September.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the candidature of Singhvi for the by-election to the Council of States from Telangana, the party said in a statement. Rajya Sabha bypolls are held for 12 seats which include the two seats -- one in Telangana with K Keshava Rao resigning recently from the House after quitting the Bharat Rashtra Samithi to join the Congress and the other in Odisha after Biju Janata Dal MP Mamata Mohanta resigned from her Rajya Sabha seat and primary membership of the party. —PTI

SC VERDICT

No relief for Kejri in excise scam case

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a corruption case filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged excise policy scam and sought a response from the probe agency on his plea challenging his arrest.

As the hearing commenced before a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal, submitted that he had got interim bail on three occasions in the money laundering case, also linked to the alleged scam, despite the stringent conditions laid down for grant of bail in cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Singhvi cited the top court's interim bail orders passed on 10 May and 12 July, as well as the regular bail granted by the trial court on 20 June.

He informed the bench that the 20 June order of the trial court was stayed by the Delhi High Court on an "oral mention".

Singhvi argued when Kejriwal could secure bail despite the stringent conditions laid down under the PMLA, he cannot be denied regular bail in the CBI case since the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) does not have similar rigorous provisions like the anti-money laundering law.

The senior lawyer then requested for a "shortest date" and the bench posted the matter for hearing on 23 August.

The Delhi High Court had on 5 August upheld the arrest of the Chief minister as legal, and said there was no malice in the acts done by the CBI which was able to demonstrate how the AAP supremo could influence witnesses who could muster the courage to depose only after his arrest. —PTI

Keen to advance ties with B'desh interim govt, says Indian envoy

DHAKA, 14 AUG

Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma and interim leader Muhammad Yunus PHOTOS: PTI

India is interested in advancing its relationship with Bangladesh under the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma said on Wednesday but did not comment on how long the ousted leader Sheikh Hasina would stay in India.

Verma's remarks came after a meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"We are interested in advancing our relationship with Bangladesh," Verma told the media after a meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Hossain at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nobel laureate Yunus was appointed as the head of the interim government on Tuesday after Prime Minister Hasina resigned and fled to India on 5 August following widespread protests against her government. This was the first meeting by the Indian envoy Verma with Hossain after the formation of the interim government following the fall of the Hasina. Verma attended the oath-taking ceremony of Yunus as the head of the interim government of Bangladesh last Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week extended best wishes to Yunus as he took oath as the head of an interim government in Bangladesh, hoping for an early return of normalcy and ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minority communities in that country. —PTI

RECALLING PARTITION

PM reiterates commitment to protect bonds of unity

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday recalled the sufferings of people impacted by India's partition and reiterated the commitment to always protecting the bonds of unity and brotherhood in the nation.

"We recall the countless people who were impacted and greatly suffered due to the horrors of Partition. It is also a day to pay tributes to their courage, which illustrates the power of human resilience. A lot of those impacted by Partition went on to rebuild their lives", he said.

Kharge hits out at PM

Meanwhile, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Modi government of using "dubious employment data for PR", and said no amount of "whitewashing" can change the truth that lakhs of job aspirants have to daily struggle. He shared a report which claimed that for 1,257 vacancies for the post of woman constables and woman constable drivers, the Mumbai Police received 1.11 lakh applications. —PTI

HC asks media to take down videos against MP Reddy

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The Delhi High Court has directed several media houses to take down and block the URLs of certain videos and posts on social media which contained defamatory statements against Rajya Sabha MP Venumbaka Vijaya Sai Reddy.

The High Court said if the media houses fail to remove the URLs within 10 days, the Member of Parliament will be at liberty to approach and request the intermediaries, including Google, Meta Platforms and X, which must then take them down within 36 hours. The High Court in its observation expressed displeasure over the spreading of rumours, especially when it has the potential to affect the dignity of a woman and the reputation of a person. —PTI

'JPC ESSENTIAL'

Guj govt helping Adani Ports 'secure monopoly', says Cong

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

- Before the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, Adani Ports requested the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) to extend this concession period by another 45 years to 75 years in total

PHOTO: PTI

Congress on Wednesday reiterated its demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) into the Adani issue and alleged that the Gujarat government was helping Adani Ports to "secure a monopoly" on the state's port sector.

Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the Gujarat government grants private ports a 30-year concession period on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer basis, after which ownership gets transferred to the government of Gujarat. On the basis of this model, Adani Ports currently has control over Mundra, Hazira, and Dahej ports, he said.

Before the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, Adani Ports requested the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) to extend this concession period by another 45 years to 75 years in total. "This was much beyond the maximum permissible period of 50 years, but the GMB hastened to request the Gujarat Government to do so anyways. The GMB was in such a hurry that it did so without approval from its Board, resulting in the file's return," he alleged.The GMB Board recommended that the Gujarat government protect its revenue interests after the passage of the 30-year concession by inviting bids from other potential operators or renegotiating financial terms with Adani, he said. Of course, the Chief Minister and all others then hastened to ensure that this proposal went through and received clearances from all stakeholders required, he claimed. —PTI

HC QUASHES ED CHARGESHEETS AGAINST FAROOQ

SRINAGAR, 14 AUG

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday quashed chargesheets filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah and others in connection with its money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA).

A single bench order passed by Justice Sanjeev Kumar said no predicate offence was made against the individuals and hence the chargesheet and supplementary chargesheet filed by the ED are quashed.

The ED had named National Conference chief Abdullah, Ahsan Ahmad Mirza (former treasurer of JKCA), Mir Manzoor Gazanffer (another ex-treasurer of the JKCA) and some others as accused in the chargesheet. —PTI

Chandrasekhar files case against Tharoor

Rajeev Chandrasekhar; Shashi Tharoor PHOTOS: ANI/PTI

T'PURAM, 14 AUG

Former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar has filed a criminal defamation complaint against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor from Thiruvananthapuram in a Delhi Court. The case stemmed from remarks made by Tharoor during the recent Lok Sabha elections. Chandrasekhar has alleged that Tharoor's statements were defamatory and harmful to his reputation.

Chandrasekhar alleged that Tharoor made serious allegations that Chandrasekhar of engaged in vote bribery. Chandrasekhar has claimed that these insinuations are defamatory and harmful to his reputation, leading him to file a criminal defamation case against Tharoor.

The complaint has further asserted that in another interview with TV News Byte, Tharoor claimed that various individuals had approached him with allegations that Rajeev Chandrasekhar was bribing voters. Chandrasekhar has contended that these statements are defamatory and damaging to his reputation, which has prompted him to take legal action against Tharoor.

—ANI

Diaspora organisation reacts to Ram Mandir tableau row

NEW YORK, 14 AUG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

A leading diaspora organisation here has strongly rejected and called out the "communal hate and bigotry" against its annual India Day parade after it announced that a tableau of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir will be displayed at the event to be held in Manhattan this week.

Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE (FIA) had announced that a tableau featuring the Ayodhya Ram Mandir will be the highlight of the India Day parade that will be organised in the heart of Manhattan on 18 August to commemorate India's Independence Day.

FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya said that the India Day Parade, which has been held annually for four decades, has been targeted by "hate-filled bigotry" for including the Ram Mandir float.

A coalition of human rights and interfaith organisations have condemned the inclusion of the Ram Mandir float in the parade and have written to New York Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams "urging them to condemn and oppose the inclusion of an anti-Muslim float" at the India Day Parade.

The organisations called for "immediate and decisive" measures to prevent the inclusion of the float. —PTI

1993-BATCH IRS OFFICER

Rahul Navin to head ED for 2 years

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

ED Chief Rahul Navin has authored various international taxation and transfer pricing journals and articles in the I-T department PHOTO: PTI

Acting Enforcement Directorate (ED) Chief Rahul Navin was on Wednesday appointed as the full-time director of the federal anti-money laundering agency.

Navin, 57, joined the ED in November, 2019 as a Special Director (OSD) to spearhead the agency's work with regard to India's mutual evaluation by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global body that leads action against money laundering.

A BTech and an MTech from IIT Kanpur and an MBA from the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Navin was appointed as the acting director of the ED after the tenure of his predecessor Sanjay Kumar Mishra came to an end on 15 September last year.An expert in international taxation matters, Navin belongs to Bihar and has worked in the I-T Department for 30 years. During his stint in the international taxation wing during 2004-08, the I-T department raised demands on several offshore transactions including in the Vodafone case. Navin had rushed to West Bengal after an ED team was attacked in Sandeshkhali and had asked his investigators to "work without fear" and prepare a watertight case.

Navin had rushed to West Bengal after an ED team was attacked in Sandeshkhali and had asked his investigators to "work without fear" and prepare a watertight case.

Navin ensured that the agency teams get "complete" protection. The IRS officer has authored various international taxation and transfer pricing journals and articles in the I-T department that are taught to trainee IRS officers at their alma mater, the National Academy of Direct Taxes (NADT) in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

He has also authored a guiding book titled "Information Exchange and Tax Transparency: Tackling Global Tax Evasion and Avoidance" which was published in 2017.

—PTI

PHOTO: STARS UNFOLDER

Bank seals Rajpal Yadav's property for non-payment

SHAHJAHANPUR, 14 AUG

A part of a property belonging to film actor Rajpal Yadav in his native Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh has been sealed by a Mumbai bank over non-repayment of a loan, an official said on Wednesday. Manish Verma, manager of the Shahjahanpur branch of Central Bank of India, said the actor had taken a loan from the Mumbai branch of the bank by mortgaging his property in his native district. When contacted by PTI, the Mumbai-based actor declined to comment on the matter. Sources close to the actor said Yadav had set up 'Navrang Godavari Entertainment Limited', a production house, in the name of his parents in 2005 and taken a loan of Rs 5 crore from the Bandra Kurla Complex branch of the Central Bank of India in Mumbai. *—PTI*

Stop 'partition horrors' in schools, activists ask TN

CHENNAI, 14 AUG

The State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN) on Wednesday urged the Tamil Nadu government to stop 'Remembrance of the Horrors of Partition' events in schools. The Governor's Secretary R Kirlosh Kumar has written to TN Schools Nursery, Primary, Matric, CBSE & ICSE Association advising it to observe "Partition Horrors Remembrance Day," general secretary, SPCSS-TN, PB Prince Gajendra Babu said in a memorandum to the Chief Secretary, Shiv Das Meena. Involving children in the partition related programme will psychologically affect them and sow seeds of hatred, he contended in his petition. *—PTI*

Rajasthan man gives 'triple talaq' over phone, held

JAIPUR, 14 AUG

A 35-year-old Rajasthan man was detained from the airport here for giving triple talaq to his wife over the phone from Kuwait, where he worked, before allegedly marrying a Pakistani woman, police said on Wednesday. They said Rehman met Mehwish, the Pakistani woman, on social media and married her in Saudi Arabia. She arrived in Churu last month on a tourist visa and is currently living with his parents, said the officials. Hanumangarh Deputy SP (SC/ST Cell) Ranveer Singh said Farida Bano (29), a resident of Bhadra in Hanumangarh, filed an FIR against her husband Rehman last month, accusing him dowry harassment and divorcing her through triple talaq. *—ANI*

Man sleeping on beach killed as SUV runs over him

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

A tragic hit-and-run incident claimed the life of an auto-rickshaw driver and injured his friend after an SUV ran over them while they were sleeping on Versova beach in Mumbai, officials said on Wednesday. The incident occurred on Monday and the driver of the SUV, Nikhil Jawle, 34, and his passenger, Shubham Dongre, 33, initially fled the scene but were apprehended within three hours at Igatpuri in Nashik district, they said. Auto-rickshaw driver Ganesh Yadav and his friend Bablu Shrivastava were sleeping at the beach as they felt hot in their room located nearby in the Sagar Kutir Rahivasi Sangh slum area, an official from Versova police station said. Shrivastava, who was partially conscious after the collision, managed to alert the police. They were presented in court on Tuesday and remanded to five days of police custody. *—PTI*

Services hit as docs' stir continues across nation

TMC MLA's son, who is also a doc, suspected of raping trainee

GUWAHATI/ HYDERABAD/MUMBAI/ KOLKATA, 14 AUG

Healthcare services were severely hit at almost all hospitals as doctors across the nation continue to protest over the murder and alleged sexual assault of a post-graduate trainee (PGT) doctor, demanding justice for the victim.

Long queues were seen at ticket counters of outpatient departments (OPDs) of all government hospitals where senior doctors joined their junior counterparts to protest against the crime.

Amid protests, a post on social media claiming to be the picture of the main accused is going viral.The young man in the picture is claimed to be the son of Trinamool MLA Soumen Mahapatra. Coincidently, Mahapatra's son is also a doctor. Meanwhile, Indian-origin female medics in the UK expressed solidarity with the protests taking place in India.

The protests were held in the cities of Kolkata, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Mumbai on Wednesday. The protestors were holding placards, "Justice needs to be served", "No duty without security" and "Justice delayed is Justice denied"

In Assam, Dr Kumar said they were demanding the accused to be arrested soon and punished as per law.

"...This is a solidarity protest. A protest has been going on in West Bengal for 3-4 days now. It has been going on all over India....Our colleague at RG Kar Medical College was assaulted and murdered on duty," Dr Kumar told ANI.

Meanwhile, CBI sources said that a special team of medical officers and forensic team from Delhi has reached the crime scene. *—PTI*

Doctors and students protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, in Kolkata on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Assam medical college tells women docs 'not to attract attention'

The Silchar Medical College and Hospital in Assam on Wednesday cancelled its advisory to women doctors and other staffers asking them to avoid going alone to isolated places at night.

SMCH's Principal cum Chief Superintendent Dr Bhaskar Gupta had issued the advisory, following the recent rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata. The advisory asked women doctors and students to avoid situations where they are alone. It also asked them to "graciously interact with the public, so that you don't attract unnecessary attention of unscrupulous people. Female students, it said, must refrain from leaving the hostel or lodging rooms during night hours unless absolutely necessary and must step out only after informing authorities. The advisory had drawn strong criticism, with many on social media tagging it "misogynistic" and saying that the college administration should focus on ensuring safety of women on campus instead of listing dos and don'ts. *—PTI*

RAM TEMPLE IN DARK

Lights worth ₹50L stolen from Ayodhya

AYODHYA, 14 AUG

As many as 3,800 bamboo and 36 projector lights worth over Rs 50 lakh installed on Bhakti Path and Ram Path, located in a high-security area in Ayodhya, were allegedly stolen, according to police.

An FIR was lodged at the Ram Janmabhoomi police station following a complaint on 9 August from a representative of the firm, Yash Enterprises and Krishna Automobiles, which set up the lights under a contract awarded by the Ayodhya Development Authority, police said on Tuesday.

"As many as 6,400 bamboo lights were installed on Rampath and 96 projector lights were installed on Bhakti Path. Till 19 March, all the lights were there but after an inspection on 9 May, it was found that some lights were missing.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

According to the FIR, the firm became aware of the theft in May but filed the complaint on August 9.

The police said that an FIR has been registered.

Ayodhya was refurbished under a major project ahead of the 22 January Ram temple consecration ceremony in the holy city. *—PTI*

'EX-PRINCIPAL PROVIDED LIQUOR TO STUDENTS'

KOLKATA, 14 AUG

A former deputy superintendent at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital claimed that has levelled college's former principal Sandip Ghosh provided alcohol to students at his guest house.

Akhtar Ali, the former Deputy Superintendent, said the college was under the control of a "mafia don," where Ghosh allegedly wielded immense power

Ghosh, who resigned as principal following the incident, was swiftly appointed to head another medical college. Ali claims this was a mere smokescreen, and that Ghosh continues to exert influence over the medical establishment. *—Agencies*

Kerala CM gives ₹6L to landslide victims

NEW DELHI/ T'PURAM, 14 AUG

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday announced a compensation of Rs 6 lakh for the next of kin of those who died in the massive landslides that hit Wayanad district on 30 July and claimed over 200 lives.

Vijayan said that of the Rs 6 lakh, Rs 4 lakh would come from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and the remaining from the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF).

He also announced that Rs 75,000 would be allocated from the CMDRF to those who lost eyes and limbs or suffered disability for more than 60 per cent due to the landslides.

He said that Rs 50,000 financial assistance would be given to those who suffered disability between 40 to 60 per cent or suffered very serious injuries in the disaster.

From 30 July to 14 August, the CMDRF has received over Rs 160 crore in donations, a statement issued by the CM's office said later. The deadly landslides in Kerala's ecologically fragile Wayanad district were triggered by a heavy burst of rainfall, made10 per cent heavier by climate change, according to a new rapid attribution study by a global team of scientists. The team of 24 researchers from India, Sweden, the US and the UK said 140 mm of rainfall fell in a single day. *—PTI*

1st phase of trial for dengue vaccine starts

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The ICMR and Panacea Biotec have initiated the first-ever phase three clinical trial for developing a dengue vaccine in India, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

India's indigenous tetravalent dengue vaccine, DengiAll, has been developed by Panacea Biotec and the first participant in this trial was vaccinated on Wednesday at the Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Rohtak.

The phase three clinical trial will be conducted across 19 sites in 18 states and union territories, involving more than 10,335 healthy adult participants.

Currently, there is no antiviral treatment or licensed vaccine against dengue in India.

The development of an effective vaccine is complex due to the need to achieve good efficacy for all four serotypes.

In India, all four serotypes of dengue virus are known to circulate or co-circulate in many regions, the ministry statement said.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Dengue is a major public health concern in India, ranking among the top 30 countries with the highest incidence of the disease.

The global incidence of dengue has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, with more than 129 countries reporting dengue viral disease by the end of 2023, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

In India, approximately 75-80 per cent of infections are asymptomatic, yet these indi-

HC DEFERS HEARING ON GYANVAPI 'WAZUKHANA'

PRAYAGRAJ, 14 AUG

Allahabad High Court on Wednesday deferred the hearing on a plea against a Varanasi court order refusing to direct the ASI to survey the Gyanvapi mosque's 'wazukhana', as the counsel for the Muslim side did not appear due to "illness".

On 9 July, the high court granted a month to the mosque management committee to file a counter affidavit on the revision plea and fixed 14 August for the hearing.

On Wednesday, an "illness slip" was sent on behalf of counsel for the Muslim side and a request was made to adjourn the matter. Thereafter, the high court fixed 22 August as the next date of hearing in the case.

Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal passed the order on the revision petition filed by Rakhi Singh, one of the plaintiffs in the Shringar Gauri worshipping suit. *—PTI*

INDIA'S 'SWADESHI' KAMIKAZE DRONES

Ahead of 78th Independence Day, India unveiled the indigenously built Kamikaze Drones. These drones are do-and-die unmanned aerial vehicles with home-built engines.

Here is all you need to know about them:

- 2.8m length
- 3.5m wingspan
- 120 kg weight but can carry 25kg of explosives
- 30 Horsepower indigenous built engine
- 1,000km flying range
- 9 hours of endurance
- 180 km/h speed
- Used in Russia-Ukraine war and by Israel in Gaza
- They can hover over the target for an extended period and ram the target when commanded by a human controller sitting far away

AI flight suffers bird-hit at Goa airport

PANAJI, 14 AUG

An Air India flight with 116 passengers on board, which was about to depart from the Dabolim airport in Goa for Mumbai, had to abort its take-off due to a bird-hit on Wednesday morning, a senior official said.

The incident took place at 6.45am. Due to the bird-hit, smoke started emanating from the aircraft's engine following which the flight take-off was aborted, airport director MC Jayarajan told reporters in Vasco.

The air traffic controller reported the incident to senior authorities, he said.

The flight with 116 passengers on board was scheduled for Mumbai from the Goa International Airport at Dabolim, located near Vasco in South Goa, the official said.

"The take-off was aborted immediately and the aircraft is parked in the bay for further investigation," he said.

The Dabolim airport is a part of INS Hansa base of the Indian Navy.

Jayarajan said the Airports Authority of India will take up the matter of presence of birds on the runway with the Navy. *—PTI*

FLIGHT MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING OVER HYDRAULIC FAILURE

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

A city-bound Vistara flight from Delhi, carrying 167 people, made an emergency landing here on Wednesday due to a hydraulic failure, according to sources.

The flight landed safely at around 1230 pm at the Mumbai airport, they said.

However, Vistara in a statement said as a precautionary step, the Delhi-Mumbai flight made a "priority" landing due to a "minor" issue on Wednesday.

The airline also said the aircraft landed safely and was undergoing inspection before resuming operations.

In the statement, the airline said that shortly before landing, a minor technical snag was detected in the aircraft. *—PTI*

DHEMAJI BLAST

20 yrs on, I-Day blast victims await justice

DHEMAJI, 14 AUG

Shanti Gogoi has been waiting for 20 long years, seeking justice for the killing of her daughter-in-law and her unborn child in an ULFA-orchestrated bomb blast during the Independence Day celebration in Assam's Dhemaji town.

Gogoi's daughter-in-law and 12 other people, including three children, were killed in the explosion that occurred minutes before the flag hoisting ceremony at the parade ground in the northern Assam town in 2004.

The explosion was a defining moment in ULFA's history, as the outfit began losing support and sympathy for targeting innocent people since then.

The Dhemaji court had in 2019 sentenced four of the accused to life imprisonment and two others to four years in jail in the case *PHOTO: PTI*

An apprehension that justice has eluded the victims has seeped in since the Guwahati High Court acquitted all the accused in the case, exactly a year ago. Gogoi, a retired school teacher, and others are now pinning their last hopes on the Supreme Court for justice.

"The blast happened in front of hundreds of people after they gathered at the Dhemaji College field for the Independence Day celebration. But there is no witness to say who planted the explosives or who was behind it," questions Gogoi, whose daughter-in-law Namita died in the blast with the two-month foetus in her womb. She wondered whether the police expected the witnesses to testify without any apprehension in such cases. The Dhemaji district and sessions court had in 2019 sentenced four of the accused to life imprisonment and two others to four years in jail in the case. *—PTI*

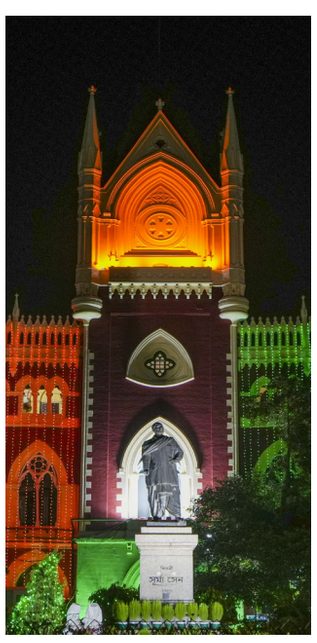
SC stays action against YouTuber in 16 TN FIRs

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed coercive proceedings against Youtuber Savukku Shankar in 16 FIRs filed against him over an interview given by him on a YouTube Channel.

Shankar, an independent journalists and YouTuber was arrested on 4 May, 2024, for allegedly making defamatory remarks against female police personnel during an interview with the YouTube channel RedPix 24x7 on 30 April, 2024. Following this incident, a total of 16 FIRs were filed against Shankar in different districts of Tamil Nadu, all stemming from the same interview.

Supreme Court also took note of fresh Shankar's detention under the stringent Goondas Act by the Tamil Nadu Police in a ganja possession case lodged in May. The YouTuber was detained again by the state police on Monday. Four days before his latest detention, the Madras High Court had set aside an order of the Chennai City Police Commissioner detaining him under the Goondas Act. It had directed the Youtuber, lodged in the Coimbatore Central Prison, to be set at liberty forthwith if he was not required in any other case. Before this, the top court had on July 18 ordered his interim release. A bench took note that he had been arrested again by the Tamil Nadu Police after the top court and the high court ordered his release. *—PTI*



Clockwise from top: People take part in a 'Tiranga Yatra' on the eve of Independence Day, in Bhopal; Trekkers celebrate Independence Day at Siachen; A BSF contingent marches during full dress rehearsal for the 78th Independence Day celebrations, in Bengaluru; Calcutta High Court building illuminated in tri-colours ahead of the Independence Day, in Kolkata; Paratroopers perform during the grand rehearsal in Bengaluru; A student with her face painted participates in a programme on the eve of Independence Day, in Moradabad on Wednesday ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD/ PTI/ X@ADITYARAJKAUL***

Lesser known heroes of the freedom struggle

Many freedom fighters dared to raise their slogans for the Indian freedom struggle in the eyes of tyrannical British Raj rulers. However, these unsung freedom fighters of India are lost in Indian history

Clockwise from top left: Matangini Hazra, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Aruna Asaf Ali, Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, Senapati Bapat and Bhikaiji Cama ***PHOTOS: X/WIKIPEDIA***

Matangini Hazra, West Bengal

Matangini Hazra is one of the prestigious freedom fighters of India, and she is also called Gandhi Buri. She participated in the "Quit India Movement" and the "Non-Cooperation Movement." She was shot thrice during one of her processions, but she continued speaking "Vande Mataram" with the Indian flag in hand. The first women's statue in Independent India was set up in 1977 and it was of Matangini Hazra. This statue stands at the spot where she was killed in Tamluk. Even there is Hazra Road in Kolkata because of her bravery and strong contribution to the Indian freedom movement.

Begum Hazrat Mahal, Uttar Pradesh

Begum Hazarat Mahal was a significant part of the 1857 Indian Rebellion. She had to take charge of Awadh and even seized control of Lucknow during the rebellion period after her husband was exiled.

Later she had to retreat to Nepal, where she passed away and left her major contribution to the Indian freedom struggle.

Aruna Asaf Ali, Haryana

You might have heard about Aruna Asaf Ali, also known as "The Grand Old Lady" of the freedom struggle. She is one of the Indian independence activists and freedom fighters known for hoisting the Indian National Congress flag in Bombay's Gowalia Tank Maidan to support the Quit India Movement. She was one of India's lady freedom fighters who also participated in the Salt Satyagraha movement and other protest marches. The British government imprisoned her for her significant presence in most freedom-fighting movements. She also protested against the ill-treatment of Indian prisoners by making a hunger strike.

Bhikaiji Cama, Gujarat

Bhikaiji Cama was born as Bhikaiji Rustom Cama on 24th September, 1861 in a Parsi family in Bombay. Madam Cama was a well-known and significant freedom fighter.

She used to belong to a good family, and her father, Sorabji Framji Patel, was a powerful member of the Parsi community. She emphasised equality between men and women. And to support orphanage girls, she donated most of her assets. Being an Indian ambassador, she travelled to Germany in 1907, hoisting the Indian National flag at the International Socialist Conference at Stuttgart.

Senapati Bapat, Senapati Bapat

Senapati Bapat is one of the most respectable Indian freedom fighters who got the honour of hoisting the flag in Pune for the first time after India's independence. He got the Senapati title and worked as the leader of Mulshi Satyagraha. The British government jailed him for public speaking and vandalism. Later, Shri Bapat Ji became a satyagraha and was not supposed to take the path of violence.

Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, Gujarat

Munshi was known as Kulpati and had a strong presence in India's freedom struggle, especially in the Quit India Movement. He also founded Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan. British rulers many times arrested him due to his presence in the freedom movement in India. He was active in those days and participated in most marches and movements. Considering this, British rulers imprisoned him; however, very few people know about such great heroes of India.

Peer Ali Khan, Punjab

Peer Ali Khan is one of the unsung heroes of the Indian freedom struggle. At that time, Mangal Pandey was one of the famous freedom fighters. However, Peer Ali Khan also contributed a lot to the nation. He was one of India's early rebels and one of the 14 people who got capital punishment due to their powerful role in the freedom struggle. Still, many people are inspired because of his significant work.

—Agencies/Linkedin

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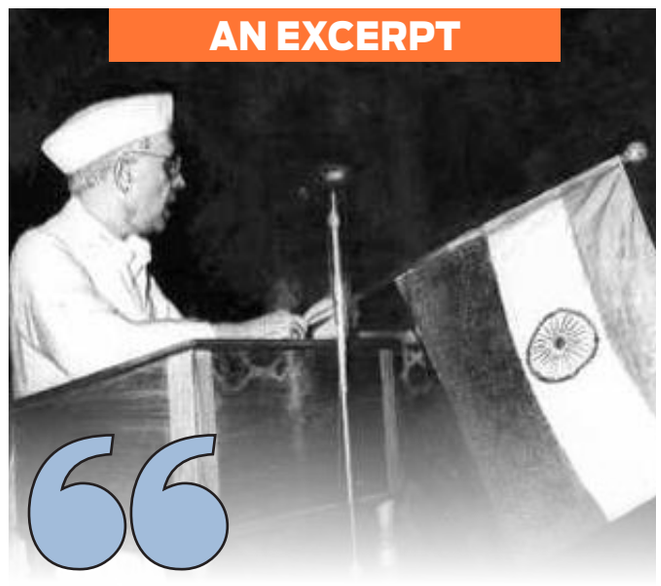


Tryst with destiny

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity. At the dawn of history, India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and grandeur of her success and failures. Through good and ill fortune alike, she has never lost sight of that quest, forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of misfortunes and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom, we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means, the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and poverty and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest men of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed!

We rejoice in that freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrowstricken and difficult problems encompass us. But freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people. We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good [or] ill fortune alike.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Ex-prime minister of India on 14 August, 1947

Story of Krishnanand Upreti and his fight

Krishnanand Upreti ***PHOTO: X***

Late freedom fighter Krishnanand Upreti opened the first office of the Congress here and played a crucial role in eradicating the exploitative British-era practice of 'Coolie-Begar' which forced locals to carry the luggage of British officials without payment.

These and many more contributions of Upreti, who was born in Hudeti village near Pithoragarh in 1895 and was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, to India's freedom struggle are part of his biography released by the Centre.

His biography is among a series of biographies of freedom fighters released by the government ahead of the 78th Independence Day.

Expressing happiness over the inclusion of his grandfather's life story in the series, Upreti's grandson Rajesh Mohan Upreti said though he dedicated his life to fighting for the country's freedom, he died before he could see his dream become a reality.

"He opened the first office of the Congress in this remote area and played an important role in ending the exploitative British-era practice of Coolie-Begar," Rajesh Mohan said about his grandfather.

Upreti joined the Congress in 1920 and opened the party's first office in his house in Hudeti in 1921, said Rajesh Mohan, a teacher at a government school here.

He said after the Congress office opened in the village, freedom fighters of the area held a conference there and began to unite under his grandfather's leadership.

Many freedom fighters of Pithoragarh like Prayag Dutt Pant, Laxman Singh Mahar, Durga Dutt Joshi and Jaman Singh Valdiya started bringing people together against the British Raj on Gandhi's call.

Upreti also played an important role in the eradication of the 'Coolie-Begar' system which was also known as 'Coolie Utar' or 'Coolie Bardais'.

Under the 'Coolie-Begar' system, villagers living in the hill regions of Kumaon were forced to carry the luggage of British officials free of cost. The practice ended in 1921 because of the 'Coolie-Begar' movement led by freedom fighter Badri Dutt Pandey.

"My grandfather gathered a large number of people in Pithoragarh to stand against the Coolie-Begar practice and inspired them to actively participate in the movement. He held public meetings in Pithoragarh and Gangolihat on February 13 and 21 in 1921 and gave speeches against the humiliating practice," Rajesh Mohan said.

He was sentenced to six months of rigorous imprisonment on March 1, 1922, for participating in the 'Coolie-Begar' movement.

Rajesh Mohan said his grandfather also actively participated in social reform and forest movements against repressive policies of British officers.

He said in 1923, his grandfather was again sentenced to jail for three months for fighting for the traditional forest rights of the local people.

He also spoke about his grandfather's contribution to the field of education.

"In those days, after passing junior high school, students had to go 60 km away to Almora to study. As a result of my grandfather's efforts, the first high school was opened in Pithoragarh in 1928," he said.

Upreti also actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement for which he spent six months in Almora jail in 1930.

"However, despite fighting for the country's independence, my grandfather could not see the dawn of freedom as he passed away in 1937 at the age of 42. But his sacrifice, his dedication and passion to liberate his country are a source of inspiration for the people of the region," Rajesh Mohan said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

3 dead in grenade attacks ahead of Pakistan's I-Day

QUETTA, 14 AUG

Suspected militants hurled hand grenades at a house and a store selling Pakistani National Flags in the restive southwestern Baluchistan province, killing three people and wounding six others ahead of Pakistan's 77th Independence Day. The separatist Baluch Liberation Army group claimed responsibility for the attacks that took place on Tuesday in the provincial capital of Quetta, days after the group asked shop owners not to sell the flags. It also warned people not to celebrate the holiday on Wednesday, marking the 14 August, 1947 date of Pakistan's independence from British colonial rule. Wasim Baig, a spokesman at a government hospital, said the facility had received six injured people and three bodies following the attacks. *—PTI*

Thai PM Srettha removed from office

Srettha becomes the 4th PM in 16 yrs to be removed by the kingdom's constitutional court

PHOTO: X@MIZZIMANEWS

BANGKOK, 14 AUG

A court in Thailand on Wednesday removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin from office over an ethical violation, further shaking up Thai politics after the court-ordered dissolution of the main opposition party a week ago.

The Constitutional Court ruled on a case involving Srettha's appointment of a Cabinet member who had been imprisoned in connection with an alleged attempt to bribe a court official.

The court voted 5:4 against Srettha and the ruling removed him from office immediately.

He is the fourth Thai prime minister in 16 years to be removed by verdicts of the same court.

The Cabinet will remain in place on a caretaker basis until Parliament approves a new prime minister. There is no time limit for Parliament to fill the position. The caretaker Cabinet could also dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

The acting prime minister is expected to be Phumtham Wechayachai of the Pheu Thai party. Phumtham was first deputy prime minister and commerce minister under Srettha.

Srettha had appointed Pichit Chuenban as a minister of the Prime Minister's Office in a Cabinet reshuffle in April. Pichit was jailed for six months in 2008 on contempt of court charges after he allegedly tried to bribe a judge with USD 55,000 in cash in a grocery bag over a case involving Thaksin, the former prime minister.

Pichit resigned from the post weeks after being appointed when controversy over the incident was revived.

The petition against Srettha was initiated by former members of the military-installed Senate who had refused to approve Move Forward's prime ministerial candidate when the party was attempting to form a government after its election victory. *—AP*

PAETONGTARN SHINAWATRA
Daughter of billionaire figurehead of Pheu Thai Party, Thaksin Shinawatra.

CHAIKASEM NITISIRI
Former justice minister and a prominent political figure in Pheu Thai party.

ANUTIN CHARNVIRAKUL
Interior Minister and head of the Bhumjaithai Party who pushed for the liberalisation of cannabis in Thailand.

ENERGY MINISTER PIRAPAN SALIRATHAVIBHAGA
Former justice minister who heads Thai Raksa Chart Party.

PRAWIT WONGSUWAN,
Former army chief who leads the conservative and military-aligned Palang Pracharat Party.

Pakistan man gets 25 years for blasphemy

KARACHI, 14 AUG

A Pakistani court has sentenced a man to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment for blasphemy after he allegedly declared himself to be a prophet. An additional district judge on Tuesday sentenced the accused, whose name or faith was not disclosed, after a trial conducted inside the central jail in Hyderabad in Sindh province. The judge also imposed a fine of half a million rupees on the convicted man. The judge said the sentence was awarded on the basis of mitigating circumstances. At the same time, he said no concrete proof was found for awarding him a death sentence. The accused was arrested under the blasphemy law after a man named Mahboob Ali lodged a complaint at the Mirpur Sakro police station against him. *—PTI*

US soldier pleads guilty to selling secrets to China

NASHVILLE, 14 AUG

An army soldier has pleaded guilty to charges that accuse him of selling sensitive information related to US military capabilities, including dozens of documents addressing topics ranging from rocket systems to Chinese military tactics. Sgt Korbein Schultz, who was also an intelligence analyst, entered the guilty plea Tuesday in federal court in Nashville. He had previously pleaded not guilty, then last month requested a hearing to change his plea. He received 14 payments totalling USD 42,000. He was accused in a six-count indictment of charges including conspiring to obtain military defense information and bribery of a public official. *—AP*

New Zealand food bank distributes candy from meth

WELLINGTON, 14 AUG

A charity working with homeless people in Auckland, New Zealand unknowingly distributed candies filled with a potentially lethal dose of methamphetamine in its food parcels after the sweets were donated by a member of the public. Auckland City Mission told reporters on Wednesday that staff had started to contact up to 400 people to track down parcels that could contain the sweets -- which were solid blocks of methamphetamine enclosed in candy wrappers. New Zealand's police have opened a criminal investigation. The amount of methamphetamine in each candy was up to 300 times the level someone would usually take and could be lethal, according to the New Zealand Drug Foundation -- a drug checking and policy organisation. *—AP*

US approves $20B in weapons sales to Israel

WASHINGTON, 14 AUG

The US has approved USD 20 billion in arms sales to Israel, including scores of fighter jets and advanced air-to-air missiles, the State Department announced on Tuesday.

Congress was notified of the impending sale, which includes more than 50 F-15 fighter jets, Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles, or AMRAAMs, 120 mm tank ammunition and high explosive mortars and tactical vehicles and comes at a time of intense concern that Israel may become involved in a wider Middle East war.

The weapons are not expected to get to Israel anytime soon, they are contracts that will take years to fulfil. Much of what is being sold is to help Israel increase its military capability. "The United States is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to US national interests to assist Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability. This proposed sale is consistent with those objectives," the State Department said in a release on the sale.

The Biden administration has had to balance its continued support for Israel with a growing number of calls from lawmakers and the US public to curb military support there due to the high number of civilian deaths in Gaza. *—AP*

ISRAELI STRIKES KILL AT LEAST 17 IN GAZA

JERUSALEM, 14 AUG

Palestinian health officials say Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip overnight and into Wednesday killed at least 17 people, including five children and their parents.

The latest strikes came on the eve of new talks aimed at reaching a cease-fire in the 10-month-long war. The United States, Qatar and Egypt are hoping to broker an agreement, but the sides remain far apart on several issues even after months of indirect negotiations. Earlier, ne strike hit a family home in Nuseirat refugee camp killing five children. *—AP*

BANGLA VIOLENCE

2nd case filed against Bangladesh's ousted PM

DHAKA, 14 AUG

A case of enforced disappearance was filed on Wednesday against Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and several others, including former ministers of her cabinet, on the charge of kidnapping a lawyer in 2015.

The victim of the forced disappearance, Supreme Court lawyer Sohel Rana filed the case application, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

The court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Farzana Shakila Sumu Chowdhury ordered the allegations to be accepted as a case.

Sheikh Hasina *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Other accused in the case include senior ministers of Hasina's cabinet, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, former law minister Anisul Haq, former inspector general of Police Shahidul Haque, former director general of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Benazir Ahmed, and 25 unidentified members of the RAB.

On Tuesday, a murder case was lodged against Hasina and six others over the death of a grocery shop owner during last month's violent clashes that led to the fall of her government.

Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on 5 August, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July. *—PTI*

US denies involvement in Hasina's ouster

WASHINGTON, 14 AUG

The US has described as "laughable" and "false" the accusation that it was behind former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

"That's laughable. Any implication that the United States was involved in Sheikh Hasina's resignation is absolutely false," Vedant Patel, US State Department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson, said on Tuesday when asked about Hasina's accusation that the United States orchestrated mass protests that led to her ouster after weeks of violence. *—AP*

Hindu family's house torched in Bangladesh: Report

DHAKA, 14 AUG

Arsonists torched a house belonging to a Hindu family with no political affiliation in northwest Bangladesh, a media report said on Wednesday, in the latest incident of targeted attacks on the minorities, after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government. The incident in Farabari Mandirpara village in Akcha union under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila took place on Tuesday evening, hours after Chief Advisor Yunus Muhammad assured to punish perpetrators. *—PTI*

2nd Russian region declares emergency

KYIV, 14 AUG

Russia's Belgorod border region declared an emergency on Wednesday under heavy shelling by Ukrainian forces that are pressing a major cross-border incursion into the adjacent Kursk region for a second week.

Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov described the situation there as "extremely difficult and tense" as the attacks destroyed homes and caused civilian casualties, unnerving local people.

Children in particular are being moved to safety, he said on his Telegram channel, adding that about 5,000 children are in camps in safe areas. He said the previous day that around 11,000 people had fled their homes, with about 1,000 staying in temporary accommodation centres.

Russian military vehicle boarding a lowboy for transfer to Kursk region *PHOTO: PTI*

Ukrainian charge onto Russian soil has rattled Kremlin. The daring Kursk operation is the largest attack on Russia since World War II and could involve as many as 10,000 Ukrainian troops backed by armour and artillery, military analysts say. An emergency was declared in Kursk last Saturday. A Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Kyiv has no intention of occupying the Russian territory it says it is holding. The goal is to stop Russia from firing missiles into Ukraine. *—AP*

Japan's Kishida to resign, paving way for new PM

TOKYO, 14 AUG

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in a surprise move Wednesday, announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, paving the way for Japan to have a new prime minister.

Kishida was elected president of his governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 2021 and his three-year term expires in September.

His drop out of the race means a new leader who wins the party vote will succeed him as prime minister because the LDP controls both houses of parliament.

Kishida, stung by his party's corruption scandals, has suffered dwindling support ratings that have dipped below 20 per cent.

Fumio Kishida *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Since the corruption scandal broke, Kishida has removed a number of Cabinet ministers and others from party executive posts, dissolved party factions that were criticized as the source of money-for-favour politics, and passed a law tightening political funds control law. But support for his government has dwindled. *—PTI*

Kamala *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

KAMALA LAUNCHES $90 M IN AD CAMPAIGN

WASHINGTON, 14 AUG

US Republican candidate Kamala Harris' campaign is launching a USD 90 million advertising effort over the next three weeks to introduce the Democrat to voters and sharpen the contrast with Republican Donald Trump.

The media buy marks her campaign's largest-yet investment in messaging to voters with just 2 1/2 months until Election Day in November. It comes on the heels of a USD 50 million worth of ads booked last month shortly after Harris replaced President Joe Biden at the top of the party's ticket.

Harris' campaign is buoyed by a rush of fundraising since the switch, and is now moving to spend the money in an effort to counter what had been overwhelming spending by Trump and his allies in the days after Biden dropped out.

Harris' team said the ad campaign will focus on the vice president's personal narrative, her career as a prosecutor in California, her commitment to standing up to powerful interests, and a contrast with what it termed Trump's "dangerous, extreme agenda."

The ad buy will reach seven battleground states, and will expand the Harris' team spending to smaller markets they have not yet reached. The campaign said it is targeting its spending at programmes watched by the voters they are looking to motivate to the polls. *—AP*

AMID BANS AND SHUTDOWNS

Taliban celebrates 3 years of Afgan takeover

KABUL, 14 AUG

The Taliban celebrated the third anniversary of their return to power at a former US air base in Afghanistan on Wednesday, but there was no mention of the country's hardships or promises of hope for the struggling population.

Under blue skies and blazing sunshine at Bagram — once the epicentre of America's war to unseat the Taliban and hunt down the Al-Qaida perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks — members of the Taliban cabinet lauded achievements like strengthening Islamic law and establishing a military system that provides "peace and security."

The Bagram parade was Taliban's most defiant since regaining control of the country. The audience included senior Taliban officials like Acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob and Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani. Supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada was not at the parade. Women were barred.

The parade was also an opportunity to showcase military hardware abandoned by US and NATO-led forces after decades of war. *—PTI*

Taliban fighters celebrate the third anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led troops from Afghanistan, in Lashkar Gah on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS LOOMS

- Girls are banned from education beyond the sixth grade, any forms of employment and from playing sports and even visiting parks.
- Taliban have also curtailed freedom of expression. Protesters, critics, and journalists are tortured.
- UN says 23 million people face food insecurity, among which women and girls are most affected.
- Loss of foreign aid has harmed healthcare system and have exacerbated malnutrition
- There is massive unemployment and World Bank warns of zero growth over the next three years.

Rupee rises 2 paise to close at 83.95 against USD

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

The rupee traded in a narrow range to settle 2 paise higher at 83.95 (provisional) against the American currency on Wednesday, helped by a sharp decline in the US Dollar against major currencies overseas. Forex traders said a mixed-to-positive tone in the domestic market also supported the rupee. However, foreign fund outflows and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East restricted the rise in the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.90 but soon fell into the negative zone and touched an intraday low of 83.97 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled at 83.95 (provisional) against the American currency, 2 paise higher from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee settled for the day on a flat note at 83.97 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Gold rises ₹300; silver declines ₹300

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Gold prices rose Rs 300 to Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a jump in precious metal rates in the international markets. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at Rs 72,850 per 10 grams in the previous session on Tuesday. However, silver prices declined by Rs 300 to Rs 83,200 per kilogram from Rs 83,500 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Extending gains for the third straight session, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity climbed by Rs 300 each to Rs 73,150 and Rs 72,800 per 10 grams, respectively. Traders said gold prices saw an uptrend due to a rise in domestic demand as well as global influences. Globally, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,512.30 per ounce, up by USD 4.50 per ounce. *—PTI*

Maruti gets ₹3.8 cr showcause notice from customs

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Maruti Suzuki India on Wednesday said it has received a showcause notice from customs authority demanding payment of differential duty of over Rs 3.8 crore. According to a regulatory filing, the company has received a show cause notice from the Office of the Commissioner of Customs (Import), Air Cargo Complex, Mumbai. "In this show cause notice, the authority has asked the company to provide the reasons for claiming custom duty exemption on the import of certain category of goods and to pay the differential duty of Rs 3,81,37,748 along with applicable interest and penalty," it said. There is no major impact on financial, operation or other activities due to this notice, the company added. Shares of the company were trading 0.34 per cent higher at Rs 12,206.85 apiece on the BSE. *—PTI*

Palm oil imports hit seasonal high in July

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

India's palm oil imports reached a seasonal high of 10.81 lakh tonne in July, leading to port congestion and berthing delays of 8-10 days, industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said on Wednesday. The imports were marginally lower than 10.86 lakh tonne in July 2023. Palm oil made up 57 per cent of the total vegetable oil imports. Total vegetable oil imports stood at 18.95 lakh tonne in July, up from 17.71 lakh tonne a year ago, SEA said in a statement. The oil year runs from November to October. India is the world's largest importer and consumer of vegetable oils. SEA said the 20 per cent surge in imports in the third quarter(May-July), was driven by expectations for the upcoming festive season. This led to congestion at Kandla port, with berthing delays of 8-10 day. Among soft oils, sunflower oil imports rose to 3.66 lakh tonne from 3.27 lakh tonne. *—PTI*

SC ruling on mining royalty to jolt industry

Report says arrears may hit up to ₹2 lakh cr

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The Supreme Court verdict on mining royalty case will give a further jolt to the Indian mining industry and will have very large financial implications, as arrears may work out to the tune of more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore to Rs 2 lakh crore, industry players said on Wednesday.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the power of states to levy tax on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land, and allowed them to seek refund of royalty from April 1, 2005 onwards. According to a senior mines ministry official, the verdict will have a very large financial impact on mining, steel, power and coal companies. "The investment of the companies operating in mining, power and steel sectors will also be hit," the official said.

According to Miners' body FIMI, the Indian mining sector is already saddled with highest taxation in the world. The judgement of the Supreme Court of 25 July, 2024 has given unbridled powers to States for imposing various taxes and levies, said BK Bhatia, Additional Secretary General FIMI.

"Now this order of 14th August mandating collecting dues retrospectively with effect from 1st April, 2005 will give further jolt to the Indian mining industry as arrears may work out to the tune of more than Rs 1.5 to Rs 2 lakh crores and the mines in the States like Odisha and Jharkhand would be most affected," Bhatia added.

The verdict overruled a 1989 judgement, which held that only the Centre has power to impose royalty on minerals **PHOTO: PTI**

In a majority 8:1 verdict on 25 July, the bench had held that legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with states. The verdict had overruled a 1989 judgement, which held that only the Centre has power to impose royalty on minerals and mineral-bearing land. According to Bhatia, this (the latest SC verdict) is bound to have a crippling impact not only on the mining industry but on the entire value chain and will lead to unprecedented inflationary rise in all the end products. *—PTI*

IT SHARES REBOUND

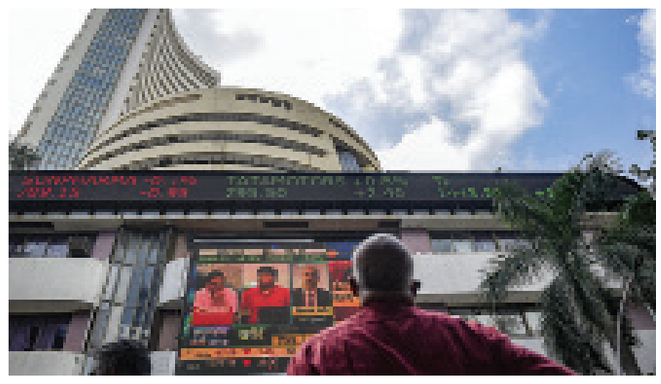
Sensex rises 150 points, snaps two-day losing streak

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

Snapping its two-day losing streak, benchmark BSE Sensex closed higher by 150 points on Wednesday following a rally in IT stocks amid a surge in the US markets on renewed hopes of a rate cut by the Fed in September.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 149.85 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 79,105.88 with half of its constituents ending higher. During the day, it gained 272.91 points or 0.34 per cent to hit a high of 79,228.94. The NSE Nifty closed marginally up by 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent at 24,143.75. As many 26 Nifty shares closed lower while 24 advanced.

"The domestic market traded within a narrow range; even as global markets saw a positive turnaround. The IT index edged up, reflecting optimism for improved US CPI data expected later today, which could increase the scope of a loose monetary policy from the Fed," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Among Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services rose the most by 2.3 per cent. HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors were the biggest gainers.



The NSE Nifty closed marginally up by 4.75 points **PHOTO: PTI**

- Snapping its two-day losing streak, benchmark BSE Sensex closed higher by 150 points on Wednesday following a rally in IT stocks amid a surge in the US markets on renewed hopes of a rate cut by the Fed

On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, Power Grid and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards. Mining shares declined after the Supreme Court rejected the Centre's plea for prospective effect of its July 25 verdict, which upheld the power of states to levy tax on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land, and allowed them to seek a refund of royalty from April 1, 2005 onwards. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.57 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.41 per cent. *—PTI*

LIC Mutual Fund presently has an AUM of Rs 33,000 crore **PHOTO: PTI**

LIC MF eyes inorganic growth, targets 1L cr AUM

DURGAPUR, 14 AUG

- LIC Mutual Fund, an associate company of financial behemoth LIC, is looking for inorganic growth to increase its assets under management (AUM), a company official said.

LIC Mutual Fund, an associate company of financial behemoth LIC, is looking for inorganic growth to increase its assets under management (AUM), a company official said.

LIC Mutual Fund presently has an AUM of Rs 33,000 crore as of July 2024. "We are looking at inorganic growth. The company is on the lookout to buyout a fund house and the plan is on the drawing board," Managing Director and CEO of LIC Mutual Fund Ravi Kumar Jha said.

In July 2023, LIC Mutual Fund acquired IDBI Mutual Fund at a consideration of Rs 133 crore. Jha said, "One fund house is on the radar and money is not a problem to fund the buyout".

He said that at the end of the last financial year, the company's AUM was Rs 27,733 crore. The target AUM at the end of the current financial year is Rs 60,000 crore, and Rs one lakh crore by the end of March 2026.

Referring to the budget which raised the short-term capital gains tax from 15 per cent to 20 per cent for redemption within one year, Jha said that it would be positive for investors. "The rise in short-term capital gains tax (short term being defined as a time span of 12 months) will prove to be a deterrent for redemption within one year," he said.

LIC Mutual Fund is also working on digital transformation by integrating its app with others like Zerodha and Upstox. *—PTI*

₹158.9 CR SETTLEMENT

SC stays NCLAT's verdict on payment between Byju's & BCCI

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the verdict of the insolvency appellate tribunal, NCLAT, approving Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement of edtech major Byju's with the BCCI.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud also stayed the NCLAT verdict setting aside the insolvency proceedings against Byju's. It issued notices to Byju's on a plea of US-based creditor Glas Trust Company LLC against the NCLAT verdict. The bench, also comprising justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, directed the BCCI to keep in a separate account Rs 158.9 crore received by it from Byju's in view of a settlement.

PHOTO: X

On 2 August, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had approved the Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the BCCI and set aside insolvency proceedings against Byju's, a move that will effectively put Byju Raveendran back in control of the firm.

Singhvi said a stay will lead to revival of the committee of creditors (CoC) which was set up following the institution of insolvency proceedings against Byju's. The NCLAT had approved the Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with BCCI and set aside insolvency proceedings against Byju's.

Byju's had entered into a "Team Sponsor Agreement" with the BCCI in 2019. Under the agreement, the ed-tech firm got exclusive rights to display its brand on the Indian cricket team's kit and some other benefits. Under the agreement, Byju's had to pay a sponsorship fee. The company met its obligations till the middle of 2022 but defaulted on subsequent payments of Rs 158.9 crore. *—PTI*

Android app Nova fires entire team

CHICAGO, 14 AUG

Amid the ongoing wave of tech layoffs, a Chicago-based Branch company, parent of the popular Android application Nova Launcher, laid off an entire team working on the project. Only except the original creator Kevin Barry all the staffs were laid off.

The Nova Launcher layoffs are significant because they affected all the staff members except the founder.

The recent round of Branch layoffs left Kevin Barry as the full-time developer working on the Nova Launcher application.

He is said to remain in charge of the project and continue development.

Kevin Barry posted on the official website announcing the layoffs of the Nova Launcher team.

— Salar News with Agencies

In April wholesale inflation stood at 1.19 per cent **PHOTO: PTI**

India's exports dip 1.2%

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

After remaining in the positive zone for three months, India's exports contracted 1.2 per cent to USD 33.98 billion in July, while the trade deficit widened to USD 23.5 billion.

According to government data, imports rose by about 7.45 per cent to USD 57.48 billion in July due to a jump in the inbound shipments of crude oil, silver and electronic goods.

Crude oil imports rose 17.44 per cent to USD 13.87 billion, while silver imports jumped 439 per cent to USD 165.74 million during the month under review. The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, was USD 21 billion in June and USD 19.3 billion in July 2023.

Briefing media on data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that going by the current trend, the country's total exports of goods and services will cross last year's figure of USD 778 billion.

He said that one of the reasons for the dip in merchandise exports is the fall in the shipments of petroleum products, which has declined by 22.15 per cent to USD 5.22 billion. Fall in prices, low demand and increasing domestic consumption have led to a dip in the exports of petroleum products in July.

The other export sectors, which have recorded negative growth during the month, include rice, cashew, oil seeds, marine products, gems and jewellery, chemicals, and cotton yarn/fabrics. Gold imports dipped by 10.65 per cent to USD 3.13 billion in July. *—PTI*

WHY STARBUCKS FIRED ITS CEO LAXMAN NARASIMHAN

Starbucks has announced the departure of its Indian-origin chief executive office (CEO) Laxman Narasimhan. Reportedly, the sales of the company declines and faced a tough April earnings report, which negatively impacted its stock and led to Narasimhan's termination

Age: 57, Indian (Pune)-American businessman

Education: College of Engineering, Pune (BTech) • University of Pennsylvania (MA, MBA)

HOW LONG HE WAS STARBUCKS CEO?

- Narasimhan lasted for 18 months as the CEO
- He succeeded Howard Schultz

WHY STARBUCKS IS BEING BOYCOTTED

- Starbucks has come under fire for allegedly funding Israel military amid ongoing war with Palestine. The calls for a boycott intensified especially after this. However, the company has firmly denied claims

WHAT HAPPENED?

- Two straight quarters of comparable sales declines, and its shares had fallen 20% this year before the CEO change.
- The board was reportedly facing pressure from activist investors Elliott Investment Management and Starboard Value, and former CEO Howard Schultz after suffering losses.
- According to reports, 74 CEOs were fired in the US this year

REMUNERATION OF NARASIMHAN

- $1.3 million, along with a signing bonus of approximately $1.6 millionly.

WHO IS NEXT STARBUCKS CEO?

- **CFO Rachel Ruggeri** is the interim CEO
- **Brian Nicco** to take over on 9 September

ETIHAD TO OPERATE AIRBUS A380 ON MUMBAI-ABU DHABI ROUTE

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

The UAE national carrier Etihad Airways on Wednesday said it will operate its iconic Airbus A380 plane to Mumbai for a special four-month period, starting September 1.

The move comes against the backdrop of Etihad completing two decades of its operations in Mumbai, the airline said in a statement. The airline currently offers nonstop services between Abu Dhabi and 11 Indian cities, with plans for further expansion.

Starting from September 1 until December 31, the double-decker aircraft will operate three weekly flights between Abu Dhabi and Mumbai, Etihad said. Etihad said its relationship with India has deepened since the launch of the first flight to Mumbai on September 26, 2004. "While this iconic aircraft is typically reserved for long-haul journeys, for our 20 years of celebrations of flying to India, we will showcase the A380 on three-days a week for a period of four months," said Arik De, Etihad's Chief Revenue. *—PTI*

HP announces ₹696 crore investment to boost tourism

SHIMLA, 14 AUG

- Tenders have been invited for all these projects, aiming to enhance the influx of tourists in the state, a statement issued here

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has said that 11 projects with an outlay of Rs 696.47 crore are underway to give a fillip to the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh.

Presiding over a meeting of the tourism department here last evening, he said tenders have been invited for all these projects, aiming to enhance the influx of tourists in the state, a statement issued here on Wednesday said.

"It was essential to enhance the overall tourism experiences in the state and create new infrastructure as tourism is a key sector for our economy supporting the livelihood of thousands of families directly or indirectly," he said.

As per the statement, the 11 projects include a convention centre at Dharamshala (Rs 161.91 crore); beautification of Palampur and Nagrota Bagwan (Rs 95.50 crore); wellness centre at Nadaun (Rs 91.42 crore); ice skating rink cum roller skating rink at Dharamshala (Rs 39.51 crore), among others. *—PTI*

2.04% IN JULY

Wholesale inflation falls to 3-month low

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Wholesale inflation fell to a 3-month low of 2.04 per cent in July on decline in prices of food items especially vegetables, government data released on Wednesday showed.

The decline in wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation in July came after it rose for four months in a row till June, when it was 3.36 per cent. It was (-) 1.23 per cent in July last year.

In April wholesale inflation stood at 1.19 per cent.

As per the data, food inflation in July was 3.45 per cent, down from 10.87 per cent in June, mainly due to month-on-month decline in prices of vegetables, cereals, pulses and onion.

In April wholesale inflation stood at 1.19 per cent **PHOTO: PTI**

Vegetables recorded a deflation of 8.93 per cent in July, against a 38.76 per cent inflation in the previous month.

"Positive rate of inflation in July, 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, other manufacturing etc," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

The annual rate of inflation of the manufactured Products group increased to 1.58 per cent in July 2024, from 1.43 per cent in June 2024.

Inflation in fuel and power basket rose to 1.72 per cent in July, from 1.03 per cent in the previous month.

The decline in July WPI was in line with the retail inflation data for the month. Retail inflation fell to a near 5-year low of 3.54 per cent in July, data released earlier this week showed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Zeeshan Ali resigns as India's Davis Cup coach

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Zeeshan Ali on Wednesday announced that he has resigned as India coach, insisting that it was time to focus on the development of the National Tennis Centre (NTC). Zeeshan had replaced Nandan Bal as India's Davis Cup coach in 2013 when the country's top players had revolted against AITA, demanding better playing conditions, and refused to play against Korea in New Delhi. The 54-year-old Zeeshan captained the country in the historic tie against Pakistan, which India won in Islamabad early this year with regular skipper Rohit Rajpal missing the assignment due to personal reasons. "I felt that now was a good time to give my resignation as the coach of the Davis Cup team," Zeeshan told. *—PTI*

Pak to play test against B'desh without fans

ISLAMABAD, 14 AUG

The second cricket test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh in Karachi starting Aug. 30 will be played without fans due to ongoing construction work at the National Bank Stadium, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Wednesday. The PCB started renovating the stadium this month as part of its preparations for next year's Champions Trophy, which begins 19 February. The PCB said it has suspended ticket sales for the Karachi test "with immediate effect" and that fans who have already purchased tickets will receive a full refund. "The health and safety of our fans is our utmost priority," the PCB said in a statement. "After careful consideration of all available options, we have decided that the safest course of action is to hold the second test in front of an empty stadium." *—AP*

Man United signs De Ligt and Mazraoui

MANCHESTER, 14 AUG

Manchester United signed Netherlands center back Matthijs de Ligt and Morocco full back Noussair Mazraoui from Bayern Munich on Tuesday. The 25-year-old De Ligt agreed to a five-year deal, with the option to extend for a further year. The 26-year-old Mazraoui, who can play as a right back or left back, has a contract until June 2028, also with the option to extend for a further year. No transfer fees were announced but British media reported United was paying 60 million pounds ($77 million) for Mazraoui and De Ligt. *—AP*

Morne Morkel appointed India's new bowling coach

MORKEL TO TAKE CHARGE FROM BANGLADESH SERIES

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Former South Africa pace great Morne Morkel has been roped in as the Indian cricket team's new bowling coach, BCCI secretary Jay Shah told PTI on Wednesday, completing the appointment of new head coach Gautam Gambhir's preferred support staff.

It is understood that the 39-year-old, who replaces Paras Mhambrey, will take over as the bowling coach from the Bangladesh series that starts with the opening Test in Chennai from September 19. He has been appointed till the end of the 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa. "Yes, Morne Morkel has been appointed bowling coach of the senior India men's team," Shah told PTI.

The other members of Gambhir's support staff are assistant coach Abhishek Nayar, and fielding coach Ryan Ten Doeschate. Morkel was also Gambhir's preferred choice, having worked with him at Lucknow Super Giants during the Indian's two IPL seasons as mentor of the franchise.

Morkel has played 86 Tests, 117 ODIs and 44 T20Is for South Africa with a total of 544 international wickets. He will be reporting in Bengaluru's National Cricket Academy at the start of next month and is expected to watch the Duleep Trophy games. Once there, he will also touch base with VVS Laxman and head of bowling in NCA, Troy Cooley.

According to sources, Morkel was directly appointed on Gambhir's recommendation ahead of other options like Lakshmipathy Balaji and R Vinay Kumar. "The Cricket Advisory Committee's (CAC) mandate was to interview the candidates for the head coach. When it came to choice of support staff, it was imperative that Gambhir's choice prevailed. He has worked with Morne and thinks of him highly as a bowling coach," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

It is understood that Balaji and Vinay's names weren't considered once it was clear that Morkel would carry forward the good work done by Mhambrey. One half of the famous fast bowling duo that featured Dale Steyn, Morkel is a cricketing heavyweight and has also played quite a lot in India to have a fair idea about the conditions. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X@HEATBBL

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

'India can do a hat-trick of series'

DUBAI, 14 AUG

India is capable of a hat-trick of Test series triumphs in Australia given the quality of its bowlers and the strong batting lineup that has the likes of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, feels former head coach Ravi Shastri.

India have won the last two Test series in Australia and have held onto the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy since the Kangaroos claimed a 2-0 series victory on home soil at the beginning of 2015.

"With (Jasprit) Bumrah fit, (Mohammed) Shami fit, you've got Mohammed Siraj there. You've got the likes of (Ravinchandran) Ashwin and (Ravindra) Jadeja and some very good bench strength as well... One can't wait for that series to start and (I think) India can do the hat-trick (of series victories in Australia)," Shastri told ICC.

Australia legend Ricky Ponting had recently predicted a 3-1 series win for his country

Ravi Shastri PHOTO: BCCI

but Shastri said that Indian bowlers can get the job done provided their batters are up to the challenge. "It is going to be one heck of a series and India have every chance of making it a hat-trick because they've got their bowlers fit and if they can bat well, they can tickle (beat) Australia once again," said Shastri.

The Pat Cummins-led Australia are upbeat after they exacted sweet revenge over Rohit Sharma's side during the World Test Championship final at The Oval last year, and Shastri feels that a hurting home side would be more than keen to re-claim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. *—PTI*

Mbappé makes Madrid heavy favourite

Kylian Mbappe during the practice time in Real Madrid arena on Wednesday PHOTO: X@KMBAPPE

MADRID, 14 AUG

Real Madrid was one of the teams to beat in Europe last season, winning the Spanish league with ease and adding another Champions League trophy to its collection.

And, what was good got even better for 2024-25, with France star Kylian Mbappé finally joining the Spanish powerhouse after years of flirtation between both sides. Mbappé's addition makes Madrid the heavy favourite to win back-to-back league titles for the first time since 2007-08.

Barcelona, still struggling financially, will debut coach Hansi Flick, while Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid brought in Argentina forward Julián Álvarez and Spain defender Robin Le Normand to improve its squad.

The league kicks off Thursday with Copa del Rey champion Athletic Bilbao hosting Getafe, while Girona — the surprise team from last season after a third-place finish — will visit Manuel Pellegrini's Real Betis.

Mbappé's Madrid

Mbappé will boost a Madrid attack that includes Vinicius Junior, and Rodrygo and will also count on young Brazil sensation Endrick. Mbappé is likely to start alongside Vinicius, with Rodrygo losing his spot as a starter. Endrick, who is only 18, is expected to wait longer to make it to the squad.

Coach Carlo Ancelotti won't count on stalwart Toni Kroos, who retired after last season. But, fellow veteran midfielder Luka Modric will stick around for what is expected to be his final campaign with the club. *—AP*

PHOTO: X@INSIDESPORTIND

ADVANI STARTS WITH BIG WIN IN BILLIARDS C'SHIPS

MUMBAI, 14 AUG

India's most accomplished billiards player Pankaj Advani recorded a big win by constructing a double century break of 208 points en route a 945-194 victory over Yogesh Rungta, in a third round contest of the Western India Billiards and Snooker Championship here on Wednesday.

The Bengaluru-based Advani, a 27-time International Billiards and Snooker Federation (IBSF) world champion, was in full flow and had two century efforts (133 & 122) and an 87.

In other third round match, Shahyan Razmi continued with his impressive run and defeated the experienced Loukic Pathare 666-360.

On his first visit, Shahyan rolled in a break of 84 and a couple of visits later stitched together a break of 83 while following it up with a composed 72 to build a sizable lead over Pathare.

The seasoned cueist Ashok Shandilya got the better of tournament hosts Khar Gymkhana's Tathya Sachdev 566-378. Shandilya's best effort was a 146, besides breaks of 73 and two efforts of 56 points. Tathya tried his best and managed a run of 90 and 57.

In snooker, national champion Sourav Kothari and former champion Kamal Chawla eased into the pre-quarters. *—PTI*

Chahal grabs 5 for 14 on Northamptonshire debut

LONDON, 14 AUG

India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal made a sensational debut for Northamptonshire Steelbacks, snapping five wickets to set up their nine-wicket win over former County side Kent Spitfires in the One-Day Cup in Canterbury on Wednesday. The 34-year-old Chahal has so far played 72 ODIs and 80 T20Is for India with 217 wickets across both formats to show for his efforts.

Northamptonshire said on their website that the 34-year-old Indian spinner, who was a part of the country's victorious campaign in the T20 World Cup, will link up with the squad on Wednesday ahead of their trip to Canterbury to play against Kent. "Northamptonshire County Cricket Club are delighted that Indian international Yuzvendra Chahal will join the club for the final One-Day Cup match at Kent and the remaining five County Championship fixtures," Northamptonshire said in a statement.

"Also previously an India

PHOTO: X@INSIDESPORTIND

youth international in the sport of chess, Chahal spent time at Kent in the 2023 season, taking nine wickets in two of their three Division One matches of the campaign," it added.

"Yuzvendra is another high-profile overseas player who brings with him a wealth of experience and some incredible skills. His record speaks for itself and his wicket-taking ability will add strength to our attack," said Northamptonshire head coach John Sadler. *—PTI*

Kohli & Rohit exempted as Gill, Pant, Rahul, Jadeja to play Duleep Trophy

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Senior stars including skipper Rohit Sharma, premier batter Virat Kohli, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and leading spinner R Ashwin received exemptions as the national selectors struck a fine balance between domestic performers and potential talent while picking up four squads for the Duleep Trophy starting September 5 in Bengaluru.

The tournament will feature international stars such as Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, leading all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and pacer Mohammed Siraj. T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav, who had played one Test against Australia in 2023 has also been picked. Apart from Surya, the others have confirmed slot in the team.

Wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, who was part of India's T20 World Cup winning team, will also be featuring in the tournament, making it his first red-ball assignment after coming back from that horrific car accident in 2022. Also back in business will be another left-handed keeper Ishan Kishan, who was removed from BCCI's central contracts list after he skipped the Ranji Trophy tournament last season giving priority to cash-rich IPL.

Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel, both of whom played vital role in India's home series win against England are also in mix PHOTO: X@CRICCRAZYJOHNS

Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel, both of whom played vital role in India's home series win against England are also in the mix. Keepers Aryan Juyal and Abhishek Porel are also part of the various squads. India players were supposed to play only one match and hence Kohli, Rohit, Bumrah and Ashwin were given exemptions. They had the choice to opt out as first reported by PTI on 16 July. *—PTI*

NOW A JR COACH

Hockey India retires Sreejesh's No. 16 jersey at Sr level

Hockey player PR Sreejesh with his teammates, wearing his jersey to honour him, during a felicitation ceremony in New Delhi, Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

Hockey India on Wednesday decided to retire the jersey number of goalkeeping stalwart P R Sreejesh at the senior level after he bid adieu to the game following his starring role in the country's second consecutive Olympic bronze at the just-concluded Paris Games.

Hockey India secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said going forward no senior team player will be given the number 16 jersey although it will remain in circulation at the junior level. While lauding the veteran's contribution to the game, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said Sreejesh has earned the right to be considered the "God of Modern Indian Hockey".

Singh also formally announced that the affable 36-year-old, who competed for nearly two decades, will take up the role of the junior national coach. "Sreejesh is now going to be the junior team coach and we are retiring the No. 16 jersey for the senior team. We are not retiring No. 16 for the junior team," said Singh at a felicitation function for the veteran and other members of the team.

"Sreejesh dusra Sreejesh ko paida karega in junior team (Sreejesh will groom another Sreejesh in the junior team who will wear the No.16 jersey)," he added. *—PTI*

CAREER OF THE CUSTODIAN

Debuted in the junior national team in 2004 and joined the senior national team in 2006 Sreejesh has played over 300 matches for India and has been an integral part of the team that won the bronze medal in Tokyo, ending a 41-year medal drought for India in hockey

POSITION	CAPS	DEBUT YEAR
GOALKEEPER	328	2006

MAJOR TOURNAMENTS PARTICIPATED

OLYMPIC GAMES
- Paris Olympics 2024 - Bronze Medal
- Tokyo Olympics 2020 - Bronze Medal

COMMONWEALTH GAMES
- XXII Commonwealth Games 2022, Birmingham, England - Silver Medal
- XX Commonwealth Games 2014, Glasgow, Scotland- Silver Medal

ASIAN GAMES
- 19th Asian Games 2022 in Hangzhou, China - Gold Medal
- 18th Asian Games 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia - Bronze Medal
- 17th Asian Games 2014 in Incheon, Korea - Gold Medal

AWARDS

FIH Best Goalkeeper of the Year 2020-21, 2021-22, Baljit Singh Award For Goalkeeper Of The Year in 2014, 2021 & 2023, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, Padma Shri Award, Arjuna Award in 2015, India Balbir Singh Sr. Award For Player Of The Year (Men) in 2015

President meets Indian Olympics contingent

NEW DELHI, 14 AUG

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday met the Indian Olympic contingent and congratulated the players for their performance at the recently-concluded Paris Games.

"President Droupadi Murmu met the Indian Contingent of the Paris Olympics 2024 at Ganatantra Mandap, Rashtrapati Bhavan," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on 'X' and shared pictures of the meeting.

Addressing the players, Murmu said they are a source of inspiration for all the youth of the country, especially the young players.

Among those present were shooter Manu Bhaker, who became the first Indian athlete in the post-independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games. She earned bronze in both the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air pistol mixed team event, alongside Sarabjot Singh, who was also in attendance. *—PTI*

President Droupadi Murmu meets the Indian contingent of the Paris Olympics at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI